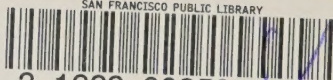


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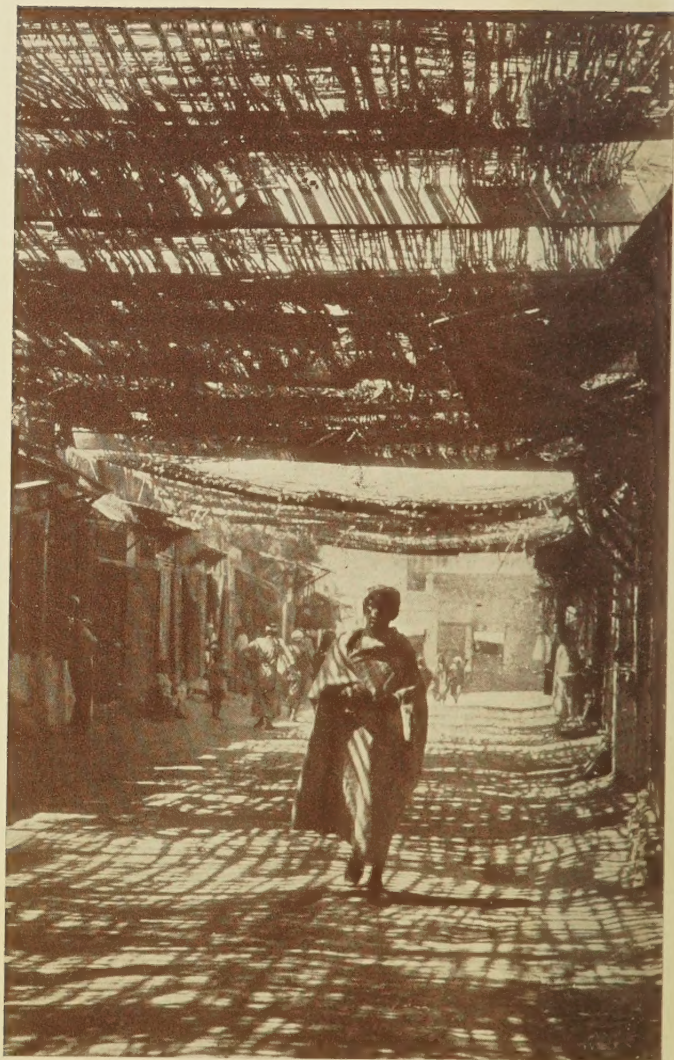
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The French have not attempted to change the native cities of Morocco. Most of the thoroughfares remain as they have been for centuries.

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

BY

WYNDHAM LEWIS



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NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

HEADED for the High Atlas, then the Sous, and the Rio de Oro—tickets bought, hurriedly I sold my goods, “liquidated” my belongings, sold my barrels, upon which stood my lamps, put in storage my books. The “Luther of Ossington Street” (as the naughty, naughty post-ninetyish old and young kittens call me) left that ultra-Lutheran spot, he kicked the dust of moralist and immoralist England off his un-Lutheran feet, determined for a while to exchange it against the red dust of the sand-wind of the Rio de Oro! I said I would go back to the tent for a while. I promised myself that I would forget this squalid quagmire of an oasis, overmoist London. Thoroughly unanchored, all trim in the rear, ready for anything (even slander after demise), with a *loupe*, water and oil colors, wood and clay palettes, razors for pencils, inks, insecticide, an *Arabic Without Tears*, a *Berber for the British*, and a *Fool-proof Tifinar*, a map of the Sahara and one of the High, Middle and Anti-Atlas—*Stovarsel* against dysentery, a Kodak (an unfortunate purchase) —unaccompanied, I set out.

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Departure in the heroic style: though of course it was unsaluted that I left; shrouded in anonymity I "stole silently away" (in fact quite like the proverbial Arab, having struck my tent first—and in order, as it happened, to go out in search of that proverbial Bedouin). The sedentary habits of six years of work had begun, I confess, to weary me. Then the atmosphere of our dying European society is to me profoundly depressing. Some relief is necessary from the daily spectacle of those expiring Lions and Eagles, who obviously will never recover from the death-blows they dealt each other (foolish beasts and birds) from 1914-1918, and all the money they owe our dreary old chums the Bankers for that expensive encounter. I thought I would not take the beaten track to Russia (where all those go as a rule who require a "breather" after too prolonged immersion in the fumes and fogs of "capitalism") but to a less controversial spot.

Perhaps nothing short of the greatest desert in the world, or its proximity, would answer the case. Yes, the Kalahari or Gobi would be too little! Also, most luckily, the biggest on earth is also the nearest. I said to myself that I would go to the highest mountains in Africa and look down upon the mirages of the great electric desert, then: perhaps, I would come round behind the mountains, this side of them, and enter this enormous waste from the west, at its Atlantic extremity, rather than approach it via Biskra, or the "loop" Beni Abbes-Timimoun-Guardaïa—with all the stupe-

FOREWORD

fying squalor of Anglo-American tourism about one, poisoning the wells and casting its Baedekered blight.

I was in Morocco all the summer: I got a footing in the High Atlas without any difficulty. But the latter part of the program indicated above, namely, to enter the Sahara at its western end, was, I discovered, impracticable. You would have to go as far south as Dakarⁱⁿ Senegal, it turned out, and so to Timbuctoo, and thence up to the Touat Palm Path, to approach the Sahara from the Atlantic. Odd as it may sound, it is in fact impossible to enter the Sahara from the west. The Occidental Sahara is verboten so far as the Paleface is concerned. No European, I discovered to my extreme astonishment, is able to set foot upon these forbidden sands and steppes. The finest of all, the *ksars* at the foot of the Moroccan Atlas, are unapproachable. The Rio de Oro is a closed book. There is a thousand miles or more of quite unknown desert—*erg*, mountain, steppe, with towns, *ksars*, oases. So far no European has ever been able to penetrate it. One rapidly crossed this region in 1850. This was, it would seem, the only European who has done so. His name was Leopold Panet. He started from St. Louis de Senegal. Wounded and robbed of everything, he succeeded in reaching Mogador. And then in 1930, a young Frenchman made a feverish raid into it from the north to a depth of a few hundred miles. He lies buried in the citadel of Agadir. "Voir Smara et Mourir!" is more or less his epitaph.

As to the Palm Gardens, and, it is reported, beautifully built Saharan *ksars* east of this ancient Kingdom

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of Tazerwalt, we have two or three meager accounts of that, none recent. Foucauld, disguised as a Jew, hid in one or two of them for a few weeks. Then there was Rohlf. But it is really the most unknown part of the globe.

Upon the edge of this vast and perilous western desert I halted. Who would not? And the following book, which I have called *Filibusters in Barbary*, is an account of what I learned in Southern Morocco, short of this impassable line of "dissidence," as it is called by the French. Beyond those desertic marches, where "Rio de Oro" begins, and the French Zone ends, no European can pass without immediate death or capture; and if the latter, there are, it seems, fantastic ransoms accompanying that.

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

BOOK ONE

PART ONE

CHAPTER I.

A CONVENTIONAL FAREWELL

ENGLAND had its watercart on at full blast as I left; there had been no sun for ten months—if you ceased to allow the Briton to wet his inside with a little bitter hops he would at once give up the unequal fight. England, my England! I gasped, my face streaming with rain. Shall I return; or, like so many of your sons, become from henceforth an exile? I wished frankly to escape for ever from this expiring Octopus, that held me to it by my mother-tongue (unless America can be said to share, with England, that advantage over me).

My first stop was in Paris: that was a short stop, as all stops in Paris should be. There I provided myself with a quantity of books and maps. I always desire the fullest information regarding any habitation or work of man, strange to me, but which I propose to approach and interrogate. I was about to visit the country of Jugurtha and of Masinissa, so I began reading about these persons—before I set foot in Maghreb I knew more about the inhabitants of, say, the hinterland of Tetouan than they know themselves

—though I never have been to Tetouan, and only came to read about it because the Gomara are a sort of “Soussi,” strangely “Berberophonic” in the midst of Arab-speaking tribes. But as a result of this preliminary preparation, I knew long before I put my legs across its back or had ever clapped eyes on it, that the ass of which the Berbers make such an extensive use is of Egyptian origin, and that the Berbers got to know of these valuable little animals through the Libyans, the people occupying the steppes west of the valley of the Nile. The wild ass, its ancestor, is still to be found in the northeast of Africa; that I knew too. Then, when I reached it, I was able to recognize in Maghreb which manner of goat alone in fact belong to it—the skinny one, with very long black hair, like tufts from its master’s head, apparently not interesting to the dairyman; whereas I knew that the Maltese, Spanish, and Angora goats (which I recognized at once) were newcomers.—This will suffice to give you an idea of the extent of my reading before I landed at Oran. It may be wrong, but that is the way it interests me to enter a country. I stepped on shore in Algeria better documented than most guides, although I had never so much as seen an Arab before, except in France selling carpets.

I left Paris within twenty-four hours. That Mecca of the high-brow globe-trotter is down on its luck, progressively it has had its life squeezed out of it by the Machine Age and is at its last gasp as a pleasure-city; Berlin could beat it if it were not for Hitler. For a day the express train dashed on through the rain,

hail and fog. Avignon was reached at length, and the sun sprang forth and shone. It was April, for two years I had not seen the sky properly; so at Avignon I got out and looked up. There at least was the proper sunlit sky. I will not describe it: there it was, however, blue and well, after the sick, moist countries. Avignon, or a little before it, is where traveling south the sky can first be seen. You don't often see it as far north as Rheims. All Heidsick or Ayala must, of course, come from somewhere else: they have to stick to the old names—there was sun there once.

The climate of Europe is changing. Indeed, the climate of the world is doing so. In New York, taxi-drivers (great observers of the weather, of necessity) informed me—that was three years ago—that ten years before that there were always heavy snowfalls in the winter in New York State. For several years they had seen no snow. The seasons in New York, in short, are now less differentiated. But in Morocco they say, on the other hand, the climate has become European (European in the old, superseded sense of seasonal)—“Now we have your European seasons,” as one *Vieux Marocain* said to me, with some pride, as if it were a result of the French Protectorate.

However, having struggled with a strong locomotive out of the zone of the rainstorms, I alighted at Avignon. From that city, still everything brightly lighted, I went on to Marseilles.

CHAPTER II.

MARSEILLES GOES JAPANESE

MARSEILLES was full of Japanese Jack-tars. There were three slate-colored warships in port, hung with tiny Japanese washing, like a million sheets of notepaper, at the bottom of the port. What a strange appearance the Japanese present in this particular disguise! How unnautical! Thousands passed up and down in parties. They were not only extremely slight and small, but in every respect looked like the merest children. Looking into their timid masklike faces, noticing their disciplined behavior, one was compelled to think of something like a Celestial Reformatory out for a constitutional, with its mild warders. Why had these good children been put in the Reformatory? Perhaps for confessing that they secretly desired to possess a blossom off a cherry tree which was taboo! In addition to such immaturity, they displayed an uncanny listlessness.

Boats full of little children, dressed up as Jack-tars, continued to be sent ashore. They pervaded the town like an army of phantom dolls. In all directions, a little stiff, they drifted, interested in nothing, their arms

hanging lifeless at their sides. A few miniature officers, bandy-legged and grasping toy cutlasses of filigreed brass, transfixed in attitudes of studied naval decorum, gazed in different directions. These were waiting to catch trams, or had drawn up ponderously to orient themselves. The exaggerated Europeanism of the Cannebière, with its shabby uninteresting South-French republican *populo*, of swarming shoppers and factory workers, absorbed these packets of Japanese with difficulty.

Before this I had not realized how youthful in the mass a great nation could remain—or was it become? Here were swarms of small creatures in tutelage. They were authentic Peter Pans, it could not be doubted. An “old Asiatic race” we should call them. But if you think of an average able-seaman of the British war-fleet you see that he would look like a hoary elder, of a more primitive stock, compared to any given specimen of this Far Eastern nursery afloat—trained, paradoxically, to handle torpedoes, and fire thirteen-inch artillery.

Next afternoon I went on board the packet for Oran, in Algeria. After seeing about my cabin, I returned to the main deck, and stood looking at a Japanese battleship—with the festoons of tiny pants and vests of the Japanese children-ratings and the long pencils of their slate-blue guns—just the same size as if they had all been giants, or British Bluejackets, that manned them. Once or twice I turned over in my mind the opinions of the average town bred routine-man regarding what are for us the distant

places of the earth. I just put myself the question, for form's sake—why was I going out to discover the Grand Style at first-hand, upon the spot, to interrogate or enjoy it in the flesh, or in the dark carapace of famous mountains? Such things can be imagined. All experience teaches us the extreme difficulty of experiencing in the flesh the enjoyments of the mind, when it dreams of what is strange to it.

All I could reply to that secular argument, of the *plus ça change* order, in the face of the displacement I was about to make, was first that I am restless by nature. I prefer moving about, it seems. Secondly, in England we exist so much in the midst of the reverse of all that is satisfyingly life-size, naked and simple, so much in fact in contact with what is undersized and so *everymannishly* mean (far too *menschlich*, in the German of Nietzsche) that one might cease to believe in Nature's existence if one did not go and resume contact with natural things from time to time, to forget how men have dwarfed it to their own stature, especially under the guidance of the Democratic Idea. To whom must I excuse myself for preferring the sandwind to the fogs of Anglo-Saxony (some mental, some physical)? I spat into the waters of the port when I came to the *Democratic Idea*, and went below to the bar.

CHAPTER III.

HIGH TABLE

(The Ship to Africa)

I WAS going to Oran, which is the Mediterranean port for French Morocco. You pass two nights at sea, you stop for an hour at Alicante in Spain. No international tourists ever go by this packet, I was told: it is the route used by officials and officers going on leave and returning to duty. After nightfall there was a dense haze; it grew into a regular fog as we proceeded. The ship's siren roared and boomed, with twenty-second intervals. At dinner a surprising pandemonium occurred: the sepulchral bellow of the radio (Toulouse Station, I imagine) mingled with the siren, and then a gramophone was brought into action. It all sounded like radio, complete with atmospherics and groans of the abyss. But it may have been all gramophone—done with knitting-needles and cracked disks, it was impossible really to say which.

In consequence of some of the combinations of sounds involved, an uproar resulted that was in its kind unique. The *Valse Triste* of Sibelius, for instance, and the siren in sinister chorus were a particularly disturbing number. At moments the discord be-

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came so startling that even the colonial passengers seemed to notice it slightly. For my own part I was seized upon once or twice by an indescribable panic. There was something frantic and deliberate in the cacophonous attack, taken in conjunction with the stolidity of the ship's guests—the decorous colonialism of them. Some communist demon of the mist must have conspired with the ship's staff—doubtless “Reds” to a man, how could they be otherwise!—to afflict with disarray the dinner-hour rites of this imperial packet.

During *It Happened*, the sixth number on the program, the steward rushing from the pantry with a pagoda of fresh plates and dishes, succumbed to a slight irregularity in the movement of the ship. The heavy ship's china cascaded to the floor, where it crashed to pieces at the same time as the thunder of the siren broke out again—and the siren was the most full-blooded, I think, that any boat of that tonnage can ever have carried in its funnel, reminiscent of those apocalyptic voices possessed by some undersized inoffensive men, to startle a street or electrify a railway-carriage, when they ask for a match.

Should we at this moment have rammed a vessel transporting lunatics from, say, Corsica to Brest (or vice versa)—then, I felt, a certain satisfying logic, a cause and effect of sorts, would have been introduced into this irrational, gratuitous disorder—but as it was, wild but squalid, and merely ridiculously bereft of all sweet sense.

The *Program* (whether radio or gramophone, as

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I have said, I do not know) was as follows—I put it in my pocket before leaving the table.

PROGRAM

1. Si j'étais roi (Ouverture 1^{ère} partie).
2. do do (do 2^{ème} partie).
3. Carmen (Sur la Place).
4. do (Que cherchez-vous?).
5. Song of the Dawn.
6. It Happened.
7. Valse Triste (Sibelius).
8. Sérénade. Vol de Bourdon.
9. Nelly Waltz.

2^{ème} partie

1. Comte Luxembourg (Je vous aime).
2. La Veuve Joyeuse (Heure exquise).
3. Léonore, No. 3 (Ouverture).
4. do do (do).
5. Manon (Avez-vous peur).
6. do (do).
7. Whatever You Are.
8. Just Imagine.
9. Paillasse (Pauvre Paillasse).

But the first-class dining saloon afforded one a first furtive glimpse of the domestic side of colonialism. All colonialism must be much the same. There was a table at the upper end of the saloon, that was the "high table," as it were. Not being French, a place was reserved for me at an inferior table, where I messed with a German governess whose destination was Alicante.

There were very few passengers on the boat, at the "high table" there were only four—a middle-aged civilian and his wife, a young officer and his wife. Later they were joined by the captain—with as much gold braid as a commodore of the White Star fleet. The two colonial couples stood up when this dignitary entered—with a stern look, because there was a fog.

During the two days' trip the wife of the colonial official made her appearance in a succession of the most surprising costumes. Upon the second night this wardrobe culminated in a massive white silk dressing-gown—which was Roman, which was senatorial. It recalled the contemporary illustrations in the Alcan Edition of the works of Guy de Maupassant. She took the floor upon this Mediterranean ferry with the air of a typically gross operatic empress, impersonating a Wagnerian goddess. There was a Third Empire fringe, a particular corseted embonpoint, an unquestioning, and unquestionable, femininity—all of which were redolent (for that is the word) of the rounded bourgeoisdom of a recently vanished period of French history: the "Victorianism of the French" in fact. How long could this imposing woman possibly have been in Morocco (or in Oran) in order to have preserved so intact all that impressive provincialism, this mellow Gallic light of the France that knew Boulanger, or Sarah Bernhardt Jeune—before the "Revolution Dreyfusienne"?

This was a great woman, but *très femme*, as befitted the lady of a French colonial mandarin. Confidences of a rather intimate and sickly order, as it were,

spontaneously flowered, under the stimulation of the captain's wine. The big queen among colonial women tenderly went through a little act, a dove-act, with her blushing *coco* at her side, for the benefit of the young honeymoonish couple, the young staff officer, who looked on *attendri* of course. A colonial idyll of "the generations," Cupid omnipresent, ambushed in the frowsy curtains of the packet!

This great old Daughter of Empire (French style) was plainly the ornamental half of a great little minor administrator of sorts, probably a cantonal Post and Telegraphic Chief, or perhaps the *Sous-directeur* of The National Office of Combustible Liquids. He might have been the Town Clerk and Treasurer of Oran itself, or the Intendant of the Salt Régie of the Tell. That she really was the wife of a little Somebody, ashore, was confirmed later in Oran itself, for escorted with great ceremony by several obsequious persons, I observed her sail up and settle, three days after that, in a conspicuous place in the main café of the town—the Continental, which had an immense, dark and tented terrace, the largest café terrace I have ever encountered.

During this first triumphal, but turbulent, evening on board, as the Queen of High Table, senior colonial lady present, she played her part to perfection. When the pandemonium all about her was at its height, she was graciously, and I think wittily, conversing—just as if these hideous discordant explosions had been arranged in her honor (a little barbaric, but well-meant!) and as if in fact they had been the invariable

accompaniment of this delicious journey back to the quasi-proconsular splendors of her official life beyond the seas.

When the steward hurled all the plates at her feet, while the strains of *It Happened!* smote her ear, and the siren rushed in and shattered her eardrum as if resolved to finish her off, she merely gave a whimsical side-glance at the crockery, and seemed (ever so slightly, but with a matchless graciousness) to incline her head in the direction of the resourceful menial. Next moment she had obviously forgotten his existence—although to be forgotten, even, by such a lady would be an experience that the less favored might well envy.

Someone said about Talleyrand that he was such a perfectly polished gentleman that, should you approach him stealthily from behind, while he was conversing, and kick him hard in the bottom, he would not show by the displacement of so much as a muscle of his face that he was conscious of what had occurred—except perhaps for giving a slight jerk. That I was reminded of this story does not mean that the sons and daughters of France at the High Table of the packet could in any particular recall such an exquisite figure as that of Talleyrand. (Indeed, I am sorry that I mentioned that Frenchman of the Ancien Régime at all, in the same breath with this company. It was undoubtedly a grave fault of taste.)

There was no British standoffishness or snobbish shyness, however, about this colonial elegance. The graciousness of the premier lady was a democratic

condescension. Even our humble estate was not forgotten. The following morning, as we were finishing breakfast, the Silesian governess and I, this great White Queen sailed over from the High Table and, to the obvious alarm of the little wizened flower of East Prussia, addressed a few gracious words to her. It was the condescension of the victorious victim to the vanquished victor, so to speak. The lady "Hun" laughed afterwards, slyly, as the "Hun" will. But she would often be spoken to after that, for an appreciable number of minutes or seconds, in passing, and made at home on the packet—the great freemasonry of the *Frauenzimmer*—I turned away when it occurred, as a gentleman will avert his head when passing a door marked DAMES.

In the night the fog lifted. Next day was fine and cool. I never ascended myself to what I suppose is called the "Hurricane Deck" or is it only "the Bridge"? It is upmost of all—the Officers' Quarters were there and the captain when he wished the ship to go a little quicker, or slower, or to left or right, as the case might be, rang a bell on a sort of elevated veranda. There were cabins on a little deck just below the veranda. There all the officers in turn, and there were a good few, might be observed playing with a brightly-polished instrument of the navigator's art. I dare say it was a patent sextant, secured on approval. Evidently it was new, and they all played with it in turn. That evening—dressed as a lady-motorist of the earliest days of the internal-combustion engine (with

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

a dash of the Victorian yachswoman, something Liptonesque, R.Y.S., and smelling of Cowes, I. of W.) the great official's lady was up on the Hurricane Deck. Whatever it might be at ordinary times, it became a Hurricane Deck at least the moment she trod it. Buffeted by a mild breeze—she allowed her spotless garments to bellow out gently behind—her arms described arcs which embraced the horizon. And this obese groceress, wallowing in the profitable squalors of the Third Republic, became symbolic, perched up in that way upon the *passerelle* of the Algerian packet. It was a Statue of Liberty. A century and a half after the tumbrils and the guillotine, here stood this bogus butter-and-egg marchioness—this enthroned charlady—being borne in triumph towards a land won for the Third Republic by the great Lyautey—a Christmas Present for a régime which could find no better way to thank him for his gift than to dismiss him at last, with an insulting recall, allowing him to leave the shores of Africa anonymously, in the first packet at hand, much like the one we traveled in—less honored than this inflated daughter of the democratic bureaucracy, whose husband got the pip in his buttonhole from Herriot, probably, for two decades of dirty work!—So thought I privately at least to myself, as I watched this gutter-empress, surrounded by the gold-braided officers' corps of this glorified ferry.—And then one ran back into the cabin and brought out the gilded instrument. Our old female friend took it as the Queen of England takes anything that is offered

her for inspection, anywhere that she goes, held it up and squinted through it, sat down and placed it upon her knees, asking the most amazingly well-informed questions, one could see at a glance. And I noticed they were all playing with it still when the gong went for dinner.

Upon the first night out the captain would slip away from time to time—the siren called him—everyone understood! Duty necessitated the abrupt abandonment of a half-finished mouthful—*the captain's place is the bridge!* Was there not a dense fog? He did not excuse himself—as he saw him go the bureaucrat stuck out his jaw and narrowed his eyes (it was a Man's World after all!) but the ladies understood as well. Anyone could plainly see that they understood perfectly: it was not their *wish* that the captain should say “excuse me” like a perfect gentleman every time. They in fact respected him for putting the Boat, so to speak, above the Soup Tureen.

But upon this second night as ever the captain was able to give his undivided attention to his distinguished passengers. The Great Woman was very tender with her coco (and in the gloaming, afterwards, upstairs on deck, we had a glimpse of her nestling her fringed head upon coco's little shoulder, while they both stared over the side of the ship in the direction of what once was Carthage, thinking of their humble beginnings). These frequent unbendings on the part of this splendid matron brought home to everybody on board the truth of that saying of the

Universal Poet's—"a little touch of nature makes the world kin," or some similar saying, of universal application.

The French Military are the nicest people in Morocco, and the young officer was a pleasant fellow enough. But a colony is a colony the world over. He and the bureaucrat knew the same places and people, it was evident: and they exchanged anecdotes which never failed to secure a good hearty colonial laugh about various *indigènes*—the natives they administered; and the droll sayings and doings of Ali and of Mohammed—of Si M'hamed and M'hamed *tout court*—were greatly relished.

Si Seddig was a queer fish, and Si Abdesselan was very odd and childish in all his reactions to the highly civilized European world, and they all had many a good laugh over these worthies and many others too. It was a good solid colonial evening.

Before lunch I had been attempting to get hold of the Fräulein's tongue, to demonstrate how we pronounced our famous ТН. I once did seize it in my thumb and forefinger and as I did so she said, *Oh Thont Thease!*—the experiment succeeded. The slight combustion of the air behind the front teeth is always difficult to bring about in a mouth unaccustomed to that operation. Later she had bitten her tongue in attempting to say "thoroughly thoughtful." Having then burnt it with the soup, she left the table, of course cursing English, and I had plenty of opportunity of listening to the talk at the High Table, and

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lunch was as good as dinner for that purpose. Its statuesque Queen was at her best however in the evening, dinner was essentially her meal: lunch was an *hors d'œuvre* or an undress rehearsal for the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

A CHILD OF DON QUIXOTE

AT FIVE o'clock, upon the second day, we got into Alicante, and the Fräulein went ashore. I waggled my necktie in farewell, she waved her pudgy fist. The poor old girl will never be able to say "thoroughly thoughtful": she will always have to refer to the Spanish president as *Samora* instead of *Thamora*, for I doubt if she will find a Spaniard who will go into her mouth after her tongue as I did and run the risk of being bitten—she was no beauty was old Hedwig, but I have a liking for all Germans.

A large Valencian with his arm in a sling came over the side, that is to say up the plank. We both looked down at the Republic. There were Civil Guards by the gangway, to stop *émigrés* smuggling out gold, and communists bringing in Red Tracts—looking both ways at once—to Left and Right (between the horns of a dilemma really). I asked the big fellow with the white sling how Spain was and he looked at it and said "tranquil all over." He fixed his eye on the holster of a Civil Guard and said it was "a good revolution" and that it was led by very intelligent persons. He said

that if the king came back they would kill him. I said what I thought of that Plus-four Gossip-star and generally of all Suck-up-to-the-Subject Royalties, and he agreed: for he could see I was speaking ill of Royalty and that was enough: the mere word Rey, I could see, awakened all his superstitious wrath. He was a Lerroux republican. He described the priests sitting in the cafés with long pagan cigars, and abusing the Republic, while they had their shoes blacked. "Priest," like "king," was a word that caused him to see pink. I left him and went to examine the other Spanish passengers.

There was one only who was interesting. From behind he would be mistaken for a very tall backward six-form lout fresh from school—still rapidly growing out of his clothes—his jacket creeping up over his bottom, his sleeves stealing up his arms and leaving the bony wrists bare or merely shirted and boyishly becufted. He had his hands in his trousers pockets. As aimless as the wind, he stood about and stared fixedly into space: but when he wheeled about he unexpectedly revealed a long El Greco mask. He turned out to be a blue-gray personage of sixty or so, with the large brown eyes of an innocent doe, with brows most beautifully arched like an early heavily stylized portrait of Bishop Gore. Although ill-anchored and aimless, and prone to drift hither and thither, he had the air of being completely at ease with no care in the world more than such as might visit a wild ruminant in the midst of its kind.

As always happens, the publication of such a master-

piece as *Don Quixote* gave birth to quantities of chivalrous grotesques all over Spain. They linger to this day. In the same way (minus the masterpiece) Edgar Wallace and his school are responsible for the great popularity of crimes of violence in England and cause our society to breed up an army of criminals and an ever-swelling police force. But this man was one of the finest Don Quixotes I had ever seen—painted by El Greco. I supposed that he was a small land-owner from La Mancha: I guessed that he left Alicante every few days with a few thousand pesetas in the heels of his shoes, deposited them in a bank in Oran, went back to La Mancha, got another note or two, and smuggled that batch out by the next packet, and had been doing this for weeks—for he seemed well satisfied, and was not at all unlike a squirrel, whose depository was already packed with nuts, out of reach and well-concealed. Or if you cared to allow some lean and dreamy stag the habits of a squirrel, then you would have more accurately the effect produced—though he may have been a Spanish solicitor's clerk sent to Alicante upon a mission, returning to report for duty next morning. The quixotic physique will set the most prosaic dreaming, after the manner of Cervantes. There may have been no smuggled notes in the heel of this person's shoe. He may not have been a Grandee of Spain. He may never have noticed that there had been a Revolution. All I can say is that his appearance lent itself to the more sensational interpretations.

Apart from whether my discovery was one of the

escaping *ricos*, or not, he was of great interest. At dinner he sat among a herd of French bagmen. The dining saloon was now far busier. These jolly drummers were spinning yarns. These yarns were followed by this Spanish gentleman with the keenest relish. He neglected his food entirely in order to miss nothing of the story; when the bagmen lowered their voices he craned his long neck forward, he approached his head so near to the narrator as almost to brush him with the bristles of his beard. Once he actually got his head between two of them. He drank in every syllable. When the joke came he lay back and laughed without restraint: and if the steward asked him whether he had finished (though he had not even begun), he quickly waved his hand and dismissed the dish and the steward too. These troublesome interruptions on the part of the personnel occurred at every course: always with the same half-impatient surprise this last of the *Hidalgos* waved his hand without looking round, to indicate that the plate could be removed.

He never spoke to any of these café wits whose yarns he so greatly appreciated. They, on their side, accepted him as a deaf-mute, evidently a little "soft"—except once or twice they gave him a sharp look when he laughed too loud and long.

But all good things have an end: these Good Companions rose from the table to go out, and the Spaniard seemed extremely taken aback. Hurriedly he rose as well. He thrust his hands half in his pockets (his trousers were too small for them to go in altogether): he followed the jolly bagmen to the door, stood for a

moment scratching his gray beard, the thin fingers of his fringe sticking forward from the top of his lofty forehead. But they evidently disappeared. So he drifted off in the opposite direction. He had lost sight of this laughable troupe of resourceful clowns, he had resigned himself to their departure!—Later I noticed the group of bagmen in the smoking room playing poker. My Quixote I came upon with his hands in his pockets looking down into the engine room. With the same childish curiosity in his noble, beautifully proportioned, face, he gazed down at the inexplicable operations of the lethargic engineers.

Next morning the sun rose over the mountains of Africa. I watched it through the porthole: and as in one of those foreshortened panoramas, modeled in plaster and roughly painted, used by the *Syndicat d'Initiative* to show you the position of the main touristic plums and showplaces, I could imagine behind the folds of the Kabyle cliffs, only a stone's throw beyond, the swamps of the Congo, the hinterland of Lake Tchad. Sunrise over the tropics was the sunrise I saw, reflected up and embuing with a peach-red glare the mists of Oranie, and the terrestrial plane of the sunrise seen between the crevices of the rocks.

At six we entered the port of Oran. And the delicate saffron and rose of this important, but purely commercial, city is much to be preferred, I think, to the uniform smart whiteness of Tangier.

CHAPTER V.

ORAN

ORAN is a stereotyped French city. The Place d'Armes is its center. Facing this, in the Boulevard Séguin, is the Continental Hotel, and its enormous roofed semicircle of café terrace. In all such coastal cities in Africa you get two or three big boulevards with palms. Here it is the Boulevard Galliéni and the Boulevard Séguin. There is the Lafayette or similar store, and of course the Posts, Town Halls, Churchès and Police Stations—the little model of French Civilization is complete. More or less entangled with it is the “native town”—*la ville indigène*, or the “Medina” as alternatively it is called. At Tangier these *barrios* are pleasantly fused: but in Oran not so. You must walk up the hill to reach the “native” districts. There at last you come upon a vast parade ground, fringed with cafés and *fondouks*—I scarcely know what to call it, it is an open space with two lines of sun-blached trees, as long as Whitehall and twice as wide. There at once is the Berber world.

This *place*—square, truncated boulevard, promenade, or whatever it is—is to my mind more interest-

...ing than all the European Mediterranean put together. The people who fill it are as they have always been. Is not that enough? Their archaic nobility sticks out in stark elevation, like a grand black forest above the depressed levelings of our Western life. Our Machine Age civilization has pushed its obscene way into the heart of their country: but for the Berbers nothing is changed, except that, by God's will, we are there, and they wish we would leave. Anything that is, is. The Nazarene is accepted for God's sake, since God has willed it—that certainly is the secret of their docility. Meanwhile they proceed about their business, wrapped in their togas and cloaks, hooded or veiled, just as if we had never existed. That is at least the impression you receive when you first pass over into this archaic zone, this "Barbary," when you reach that part of the French coast-city where there are nothing but "natives" (that is to say the people to whom the country belongs, as much as anything belongs to anybody).

A century hence, naturally, when all these cloaks have fallen from their shoulders, veils dropped from their faces, *babouches* left their feet, *haiks* been unwound from them, and the last turban has left the last shaven poll, when in place of which all sport the inverted scarlet flower-pot, the *chequia*—when all are bobbed, water-waved, shingled and helmeted—then will Berbers be just like us. There is no inalienable, inherent, "mysterious" dignity about Berbers. Need I say that? It is the *time* or "period" they represent. That is better than ours—*better* if you mean by that adjective possessed of more dignity, possessing all the

grand attitudes and habits impossible to that "hurried man" of transatlantic pattern.

So it can be said quite soberly—with none of the emotional romancing of a Lawrence—that Oran is more interesting than anything upon the European side of the Latin Sea (without setting up Carthage against Rome, because the former is so deliciously "Oriental" or any such exotic shallowness of the marvel-loving savage of the West). With us it is *the time* that is out of joint, not the place.

Passing out of the boulevards of the French Occupation you step into the first ten pages of the universal history-book—you are behind, or beyond, *la cité antique*. Or it is in other places (in the urban centers of this backward life, for instance, Fez) as if you could embark at St. Mark's, and discover yourself in the midst of the Venice of the grandparents of Canaletto (who was already getting a little Lawrence-like about his own canals) or go to Athens and find the Attic world of Pericles intact.

Oran is of, course not the best example to take—Morocco carries all this out far more fully. The farther south you go, again, to the Atlas and the Sous, the more complete is the illusion of a radical temporal displacement. But the temporal break is quite marked enough even in this enormous "native" meeting-place at Oran to justify my claim. For this immediate effect, even in Oran, the scale and shape of the great meeting-place in question is responsible, I think.—The two main features of the city of Oran are the outsize Café Continental, and this outsize Berber Square at the

top of the hill. Both are too big for Oran. It is like a man whom you remember distinctly because for some reason his extremities, his head and feet, were furnished with head-gear and foot-gear unnecessarily roomy.

CHAPTER VI.

BY WHOM IS FRENCH NORTH AFRICA INHABITED?

ORAN is, in this story of a particular journey, important. In visiting a country for the first time, your head is stuffed with preconceived anticipatory pictures, is that not so? Travel to Warsaw tomorrow, if it is your first trip, and you will enter it with a fancy-town (a sketch only perhaps, but quite solidly built) installed in the foreground of your consciousness. Then will come the confrontation! The two towns, that of fancy and that of fact, will without your noticing it slowly begin fighting. At once there are certain fundamental things, which, usually unexpectedly, you discover, one after another. This is of course very much the case in North Africa. It was at Oran that for me those fundamental adjustments occurred. Hence, as far as this book is concerned, the moment has come (since I have reached Oran) to acquaint you with them, too.

There was first the place, and then there were the people in the place. I will take the latter first.

To start with, then, when you first begin looking

about you after landing in French Africa you gradually come to discover by whom Algeria and Morocco are at present peopled. Beforehand I should have said, if asked, "By the Arabs and the French," and have left it at that. That is, in fact, not the case at all—unless you extend to the word "French" a significance far more inclusive than is generally meant by that term—and unless you realize that "Arab" is in no way identical with the autochthonous Berber population of Maghreb, but that it can only properly be used of the ruling and administrative class, or the tribes of certain well-defined areas. (The "Gich" tribes of the plain, about Marrakech, and the Ma'qil of the Sahara, or what is left of them, are the best examples: though many Arab-speaking tribes are no more Arab it seems than you or I, however much they may claim Arab descent.)

Now in the cafés, shops and hotels you will find quantities of Europeans, as opposed to *indigènes* (as the Englishman would say, "natives"). They all speak French. But you will notice at once that their French is most peculiar, sometimes more and sometimes less. Often they speak Arabic with a suspicious ease. And then at last you realize that the number of French-born Frenchmen even in Oran is surprisingly small, or even French subjects who are of French blood.

If, for convenience, you divide the inhabitants into "White" and "Colored," you will find that eighty per cent of the "Whites" are Algerians, Maltese, Italians, Spaniards, Jews, Levantines. Several generations ago some may have been French, but now few of

them can properly be called that. The true Frenchman is a rare bird in French Africa, it might almost be said. And some of the French spoken by the Algerian and Levantine *métis* is even difficult to follow. They cannot even be called French in speech.

In Tunis, up till 1931, I believe I am right in saying, the census showed that the French were considerably outnumbered by the Italians. There seem to me to be more civilian Italians than Frenchmen in Morocco even. Outside the personnel of the administrative offices a real Frenchman is not often seen.

The most authentic Frenchmen in Morocco are the soldiers, and they are by far the nicest Europeans there. But those are the officers: the rank and file of the Foreign Legion are three-quarters German. The average *légionnaire* speaks an even more peculiar French than the Levantine or Algerian man-in-the-street.

So on the whole I do not think it is at all an exaggeration to say that the true Frenchman (outside the Officers' Corps) is a rare bird in Morocco. It is the exception, not the rule, to find him, or her, among the Arab-speaking "White" personnel of the post offices or banks. With the waiters in the cafés and restaurants this is even more the case. With the cabs and transport staffs it is the same thing.

Marrakech, with 150,000 inhabitants, is the most populous town in Morocco. The *Guide Bleu* will tell you that of these 3,600 are Europeans, and that 3,000 of those are French. That of course can only mean

French subjects, for not many of them are true blue "Frogs."

When war was declared in Europe, the paucity of true Frenchmen—everywhere, for that matter, but especially in Morocco—was a serious problem for Marshal Lyautey. His country engaged in a life and death struggle in Europe, how on earth was he going to hold down all this warlike and fanatical empire he had secured for it? He had only a handful of his own people, who are not after all so warlike as all that. The way he managed it was a miracle of organization.

In August, 1914, half the French troops in Morocco had been recalled. The *Bataillons d'Afrique* had been pillaged by the central Military Authority of all their most valuable units. All Lyautey had left was the Foreign Legion, a few battalions of Algerian *Tirailleurs*, a few "Colonial units," and a few regiments of territorials from the Midi. But the Foreign Legion, the mainstay at other times of the French defense, was mainly German. The Germans began at once to desert, disappearing into the Spanish Zone.

Lyautey received a telegram from Paris on July 29 recalling half his battalions. Also it ordered him to withdraw everywhere from the interior of the country to the cities of the coast. *If possible*, it was added, he should keep the Rabat-Fez-Taza route open.

These orders Lyautey refused to obey. Instead of withdrawing, and liquidating his conquests, he *advanced*. He consolidated the empire that he had given to France. So Galliéni on the Marne, and Lyautey in Africa, these two old friends and collaborators, did

the fine Roman work that it was their instinct to do, as much as it is the instinct of a bee to make a hive or a soldier-ant to engage in warlike operations.

The radical politicians under Herriot had their revenge, a decade later, and pulled down and heaped with insults this admirable soldier.

No politics will cloud the African sky that is set above the pages of this book, but I think, if only as a gesture of gratitude for the great politeness I met with at the hands of the French authorities in Morocco, I might venture the opinion that so long as North Africa remains in the hands of Europeans, it is the French that must administer it. Indeed, it is a pity that they do not also administer the Riff and the Rio de Oro—then the whole of this part of the world would be pacified, and so a factor of unrest for Europe would be finally removed. But by "the French" I mean such officers as Lyautey and Galliéni, that is understood.

So the number of pure Frenchmen in North Africa with which all this enormous administrative and police work is accomplished is remarkably small. If you look round you when you get into Morocco itself you will perceive how the French genius for that today very questionable, that Roman, art of *colonizing*, has enabled them in twenty years to take over an Asiatic empire, and to run it as a European administration, with an auxiliary rather dirty-white population, white mercenary troops, and but a handful of Frenchmen.

CHAPTER VII.

ARAB, TURK, BERBER, BLACK, AND JEW

IN ASKING yourself by whom Maghreb is peopled, if you turn to the "native," or indigène, *he* is, in Oran or Tlemcen (my next stopping place), either Arab, Turk, Black or Jew. In the towns he is mostly Arab, Turk, or Jew. In the country, the *bled*, he is mostly Berber. The latter are the agricultural indigènes—the former the trading and administrative indigènes. The Jews are the whitest of this town-dwelling trio. Indeed, the Jews are usually, especially the women, noticeably whiter than those technically "Whites" (if you are using the Color Bar for statistical purposes). The Berbers are the darkest, because they are more often out in the sun than the others. The Turks I was never able to distinguish: I was not in that part of the country long enough to tell a Turk when I saw one—they dress just the same as the Arabs. But Budgett Meakin (the great English authority on Morocco) examined them farther east, in Tripoli and Tunis, and he described them as very ridiculous and clumsy to look at, compared to the

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Arab or the Berber. They never got inland, except for occasional forts, or at the latterly half-Turkish city of Tlemcen.

Of these "natives," all four categories entertain the liveliest dislike for each other. The Berbers say that, as to the rest, one is as bad as the other, and from his point of view he is probably right. For him Arab, Turk and Yid are all grinders-down of the face of the Berber. And as to the Arab, I need not tell you what the Arab thinks of the Jew, nor vice versa; it is notorious. And the Turk is hated by everybody, but seems to survive somehow—although I was never able to catch sight of him, even in Tlemcen.

When you get down into Morocco, all that I have just said holds equally good, except that there are no Turks. And you enter Morocco through a gap in the landscape at Tlemcen (though Tlemcen is still Algeria on the map, and so there are still Turks—though you can't see *them*, as I said, because they look just like the Arabs). That is it: this summary will take you all over Maghreb, except for the Blacks. There are Negroes everywhere: but the farther south you get, the more Blacks there are: Eventually *everybody* is a little black. Most of the caïds have black blood. Nobody minds about black blood. And of course the pure Negroes are slaves. They are from Guinea, the Congo or Soudan.

The Jews dress differently from the Arabs. They all dress in black. You know a Jew at once because he has on a little black skull-cap, which is generally dirty, and he wears it on the back of his head, dis-

playing a tousled black fringe. He wears a gaberdine of felt, which is black too. Sometimes the Jews look very like particularly squalid (probably defrocked) Catholic priests in cassock and biretta.

In Mogador, where there are more Jews than anywhere else, they still stick to black. But some of the rich Jewish worthies there indulge in yellow slippers. This is a radical departure from Moroccan usage. Formerly a Jew had to take his slippers off if he wanted to pass down a street where there was a mosque. Also his slippers, like everything else about him, had to be *black*, and to be devoid of any color whatever, so as not to compete with the orange slipper of the True Believer. He got into very serious trouble if he departed from this useful little rule, in fact was laid out and probably had his thumbs chopped off. And the Jew was about as much liked by an Arab as a mouse is by a cat.

Today the French Occupation has enfranchised the Jew. But when the Jew ceases to wear his black skull-cap and black gaberdine or black felt cloak, he steps right over the Arab white or orange: he bursts forth at once without further warning into plus-fours, a Byron collar and bright brown golfing shoes. He is also very fond of a bathing-dress (if near a beach). There is no compromise with him—he at once passes over into the “White” category, and it is of course impossible to spot him from the rest of the quasi-French, unless it is by the fact that he usually speaks more like a Parisian. (In Morocco he usually speaks English as well, if rich: mostly if young he has been



The roadway to Marrakech is lined with thousands of palm trees which are laden with golden clusters in the fruit season.



(Above) The old gateways of Marrakech are impressive reminders of the city's heroic past.

(Below) Story tellers and fortune tellers are always popular with a feminine audience.

educated at Hailebury or Harrow and of course Oxford.) The Jewish women generally wear red-flowered shawls and go unveiled. You can tell them at once. They are usually on their way to the cemetery—the Jewish cemeteries are as a rule large and have fine trees, and the *culte des morts* goes on apace.

So the Jew dresses in *black*, the Arab in *white*, and the Berber in intermediate colors (*brown* perhaps predominates in the north, *blue* of course in the south). The Negro dresses like the Berber peasant. In Tlemcen I saw masses of Riff tribesmen: they mostly were dressed in striped sackcloth *jellabas* of tawny chocolate and enormous colored palmetto hats, tufted with silk, steeple-crowned, and with the brim strung up to the high crown with cord, not unlike the huge parasol palmetto-headgear of the Mexican. (Morocco is very Mexican.) Generally the Berbers are half-turbaned, bareheaded, or if in the bled they may have these vast straw-hats. The crimson "fez" or chequia is worn by everybody (except Jews) of the merchant class in the cities: red *tarbooshes* are the cap of the city populace. Often the turban is worn round a low tarboosh. Also in the bled you get the circular skull-cap of wool, horizontally striped, and top-knotted, which is said to be a Punic headgear.

As to the stature and so on of these various component races: the Arab, since he lives in the town, is sedentary, and better off—he as a rule is fatter than the Berber, who is particularly lean and often very tall. The Jew is any size: but generally he is lean and as a matter of fact famished-looking and wolfish, *et*

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pour cause! since he undoubtedly in the past has had to work himself to the bone to keep body and soul together, with the Arab always interfering with him, and apt to take any money away as soon as he had made it; so he had to make twice as much as anywhere else, and work twice as hard, unless he was a usurer—when again he had to be a really hard-working usurer. Today lots of poor artisan Jews don't seem to know what to do with themselves, life is all of a sudden so easy. One is inclined to pity them. They ride about slowly on bicycles to while away the time.

CHAPTER VIII.

ISLAMIC SENSATIONS

IT WAS at Oran that I experienced my first "Islamic sensations," as the author of a guide book to those parts calls them—gracefully dedicating its pages to "tous les aimables visiteurs qui viennent si nombreux chercher ici du ciel bleu, de l'air pur et embaumé . . . ainsi que des sensations d'Islam!" Certainly I breathed a "pure and balmy air" for the first time for many long months. And I also had the "Islamic sensations." The Islamic sensations grew more intense as I moved inland. But at Oran already they were present.

When I went with a German chief engineer, met at the Continental, to a Berber brothel, for instance, there at once Islamic sensations were present (not because it was a brothel, but because it catered to Islam). But as I have already, in another and quite recent book, made a liberal use of the brothel atmosphere, and been rebuked for my coarseness, I will refrain from describing, the moment I reach my destination, another of these places. I shall have to refer in the sequel to the *boîte* at Agadir: so all the other *boîtes*, all along the line of my itinerary, I shall

suppress, though to neglect them for such motives may be a mistake. I know that my more facetious critics would say that my book should be called *Maisons Closes*, not *Filibusters in Barbary*, if I did not, and so injure it in the eyes of my Irish provincial clientele. (I may follow this by another study, however, entitled *The Maison Closes of Northern Africa*.)

So leaving the harkos-painted, tattooed harlots in their tinselled boîtes (and also leaving out the delightful conversation of the German engineer—I might as well suppress the whole book at once as print that, though he knows a great deal about Morocco from Casa to St. Louis de Senegal) I will confine myself to the Islamic sensations—those I got at no great distance from the Place d'Armes.

There is a small café-chantant, with a dais at the end of it, and there five Turko-Berber instrumentalists sit, fezzed and trousered, and dispense "native" music. While I was there a large soft tanned man, in a light tweed suit, and handsome fez, evidently a colonial Briton gone badly native (I am afraid very far gone) rolled placidly in, with a couple of Jewish *capains* (man and wife). He was exceedingly noisy, giving a lot of money to the musicians and inciting them to sing songs about him which the cross-legged Turkish guitarist who was the principal did over and over again. Plucking away stolidly with his plectrum of whalebone at the *ginbri*, or perhaps small Spanish guitar, he fixed his large blue eyes upon a far-off spot, and as though reaching for a good hoik,

spat his aspirated recitative out of the corner of his mouth. As his voice droned on the praises no doubt of the big soft-brown-mustached Colonial Briton who had gone Turk or Berber (I could not tell which) our fellow countryman got so excited shouting out answers to the pentatonic balladist, springing to his feet, and sending more money up to make him go on, that I thought the big white bony guitarist (whom I took to be a Turk) would get tired or be at a loss for something to say. But no, he went on and on, and the big Anglo-Saxon fellow was flushed with *paloma* after *paloma* (that is, Spanish absinthe) and his Jewish friends—a middle-aged spectacled couple—put away a good few too.

At last, after shouting back, unctuous and noisy (the great rollicking optimist) in an Arabic more royalist than royalty, with all its raucous complement of harsh gutturals and more, quite beside himself—tarboosh-and-chibouk-man, so to speak, literally intoxicated with Islamic sensations—he sat down in his chair at the table, with his heavy, tanned and mustached, face dropping forward upon his manly chest, perfectly exhausted. After that the musicians had a rest, and a *paloma* or two apiece.

The musicians differed widely in appearance and behavior. One at the end was noticeably nervous. He kept pinching his nose and pitching his heavy-lidded, bitter-mouthed head back, reckless of fractures, upon his contorted shoulders. He was about twenty with a big tarboosh, too big for the sunken

bones of his head. He would beat a skin-stopped cylinder that he hugged under his left arm, and pluck his nostrils alternately. When they sang together in chorus, suddenly he would out-howl the rest—tossing his head about and plucking at his nose, beating feverishly upon his *agwal*. He made no pretense of handling a snuff-nut—he had a vesper-packet: he did not *go aside* to take cocain, but sniffed it up without stopping his performance. Tossing and twitching without remission, he did one solo recitative, which was one breathless howl of suffering. Stamping and twanging came in the others. With the same sad nasal howl they joined him, in one long wolfish outburst. And it seemed quite natural that the doped drummer should stagger at their heels, within an inch of collapse (certainly they took no notice of him). Never once did any of the others look his way or hardly at one another for that matter. He writhed upon the flank of the indifferent sextet. He would sweep the audience bitterly with the tail of his eye, sick and detached, but occasionally leering.

The contortions of the doper-drummer, nursing his *agwal* like a restive brat, beating its bottom—now drooping over his instrument and twitching, now rolling his head from side to side upon his double-shouldered back—this studied epilepsy suggested the birth then and there of a new dance-form, invented for the harsh pentatonic howling. He was side-on to the café audience, cross-legged and round-shouldered: especially when he was drumming and howling

out the words of an incantation, his dance gave the effect of an endless dromedary odyssey. It was a nightmare desert-ride, with camels pushed to the gallop to avoid capture. It was the shattering jolts of a wounded rider, returning at top speed from a distant razzia. Would he reach safety in time? Hardly, it seemed! It appeared almost certain that death was near. Such was the only solution, death must bring this dark course to a close. A distinctly "Islamic sensation," I think, and Islamically interpreted. I remembered the story I had read of a wounded Chaamba runner, who, when forty out of fifty of his comrades had been killed in a surprise attack upon their camp by Berbers, had got away in the night, and ran a hundred kilometers in the heart of the Sahara to the nearest French post. He was so exhausted that he fell at the feet of the officer-in-command and no one could get anything coherent out of him for a long time. All that could be gathered were the words (weighted, in their form, with the authentic, "Islamic" fatalism) — "Those who are dead are dead, and those who are living are living!" This meant that most were dead, of course.

The sick drummer, when it came his turn to sing, did so in howling spasms, pumping the dismal hollow sounds out of his vitals. He might very appropriately have been recounting the last *étapes* of that desert Marathon of the wounded Chaamba—and, with a frenzied mimicry, a dying voice, have been representing what, for the sitting posture, was all that could be done to convey to the audience the horrors of the last

few kilometers. Anyway a quite good "Islamic sensation" was to be got out of him for a first night, and I went twitching to bed, racked with spasms of the coke-djinn, or was it haschisch too? He certainly drank more than one paloma.

CHAPTER IX.

TLEMCEN

TLEMCEN is a very important town in the history of Maghreb; it is geographically important; it is of first-class interest to the sightseer or student.

It is placed at one end of what the French call *la trouée de Taza*. It faces Fez, at the opposite end of the long hole in the landscape in question. It is the first town, going west from Algeria and Tunis, where you get the Andalusian Civilization (the Hispano-Mauresque) and so it is the first Moroccan town.

But it is even the first *city*, that is, old-settled city—autochthonous and not one run up by the European overnight—between Tunis and Fez. “In Maghreb,” says E. F. Gautier, “urbanism has only, in fact, developed at the two extremities of the country, around monster cities—Tunis at one end, Fez at the other. Algeria has no *citizens*, properly speaking, except at Tlemcen. The Algiers of 1830 was nothing more than a garrison and Turkish port, in spite of the presence of a few Andalusian immigrants, called by the French of 1830 *les Maures*. One can only understand native Algeria (as distinguished from the Algiers of the

French Occupation) by recalling that it is essentially rural."

So Tlemcen is in Algeria the only surviving city of the Middle Ages of Maghreb. The Bedouins, the Spaniards, Turks, Armenians etc., etc., destroyed all the rest. It is the only city of old-standing at all. Of great cities like Tiaret, there is today not a trace. No one even knows where it was. So the well-informed traveler (and I was a very well-informed one, indeed, as I have said) approaches Tlemcen with respect. Tlemcen, as a city, is not *le premier venu*. Archir, La Kalaa, Tiaret, Archgoul, El-Batha, all swallowed up in the destructive rage of the Arab, with others to help him—from Kurdish archers to Norman chiefs. Only Tlemcen is left. *And* it is the first Andalusian city, the beginning of Morocco: and a place of great character and attractiveness. As I moved towards it in the train from Oran across the Rio Salado (I suppose), through the headquarters of the Foreign Legion, and at last up into the mountain-chain north-west of the Tell (definitely continental, rather than coastal tracts at last) I knew, as well as if I had been there, that in the Mellah a foreskin was probably being tied up in flannel and hung over the mother's bed as an amulet, whereas the Mauresques—why, *they* would be on their way to their Marabout to burn incense, or *haoufi*: while elsewhere a punctilious old Reb was bastinadoing a Jewish corpse, preparatory to burying it, to spare it trouble in the next world: all the cycle of birth and death, in short, of Arab, Turk, Berber or Jew, all that the visitor ought to

know, to take an intelligent interest in—just as I knew that it was the Zenata of “the second race” that had founded the Abdenwadite dynasty: and the name of the first king, Yar-morasan, I knew as well as I knew my own.

The dolomitic cliffs of this mighty *massif* are more impressive than the Tarn, I discovered (though the wild country immediately north of the Tarn is the only part of France that is able to give you an idea of these African desert-mountains, invaded by sand and salt, as is everything else in Maghreb, everywhere spotted with the flat nomad tent). The enormous, rufous battlements of nature thrown up about this entrance gallery to the Cherifian Empire are of course vaster than the works of man, but, because they have a regularity reclaiming chaos, these cliffs should be classed with the tremendous *kasbahs* that the chieftains of the High Atlas have built. For a traveler entering Morocco by this route the Massif of Tlemcen is indeed a worthy gate to Barbary.

The city of Tlemcen is lost in an olive forest. The train, after leaving the great red bastions of rock, where you have been passing from Oranie into the dominions of the Maghzen, goes to hunt for it in its cloud of olives: and when it finds it, it is not the best approach, as it turns out afterwards; you do not at once recognize why the position of this town is so much vaunted.—However, Tlemcen is on a rock itself—it was called Agadir to start with, which means “precipitous rock” (whereas Tlemcen means “source”). You may distinguish the distant sea-line

from it upon a clear day. In winter, we are told, the almond blossoms are covered with snow. "The winter of Tlemcen occurs in the spring" is an Arab saying. How delightful when "winter" means snow, and "spring" the sun, with the most absurdly vivid, violent blossoming! With us these marriages of the seasons are deadly. They but result in worse mud. Winter wins. But that is not all: there is *no autumn* in Tlemcen, either—only three seasons. A sudden frost—and the summer is all over: except that the sun goes on shining, though not so hot. *To liquidate autumn*—what a good arrangement! Then to plant a spectacular winter in the midst of the flowers of spring! What happy climatic transformations!

"Well, if Tlemcen is all that you say, Mr. Guide," mutters the traveler, "it must be a premier city." But everything points to its being something of the sort. When its patron saint, an Andalusian mystic, Sidi Bou Mediene, first caught sight of it, he exclaimed, "What a jolly place to sleep one's last sleep in!" and died the same day. There are so many chances and accidents (I suppose he thought) that take us away for ever from these beautiful places! So he settled down once and for all, and put a stop to the destructive vagaries of Fate, as far at all events as he was concerned.

Tlemcen is in fact all that they say and more: but you must have a good smattering of the history of Morocco, or more properly of Maghreb, to be able to breathe its balmy citron-scented air intelligently—in addition to staring at its storks' nests at the top of all

its minarets, and remaining open-mouthed in front of its fondouks and synagogues.

Often in the past I have stared stupidly at vast systems of machinery—in factories and power-houses—for many minutes, until it got too hot or I was moved on, without having the least idea what these monstrous concatenations of steel might be for. A city and its history are the same as that. Wherever you get people you get this: it is all meaningless and really rather silly unless you know what it's all about.

There is an opposite difficulty of course: namely, when people know what a thing signifies *historically* (just as they might be informed of the uses of a complicated machine), often they see too much, and much that is not there at all. Thus nothing will persuade me that the Koutoubia (the celebrated mosque-tower at Marrakech) is anything but a pleasantly arranged square tower. The lyrical flights of fancy regarding it are aberrations merely of the historically-minded—a triumph of history over the eyes in the head.

For one popular authority upon Morocco, for instance, the Koutoubia possesses "the stern harmony of the noblest architecture": and this writer adds, "the Koutoubia would be magnificent anywhere: in this flat desert it is grand enough to face the Atlas." That, to my mind, is a pure exaggeration: the Koutoubia, the Giralda at Seville, and the Tower of Hasan at Rabat, are the three star-pieces of Hispano-Mauresque. The ruined tower of Mansoura, outside Tlemcen, must have made a fourth, had it been left

intact. But because, come to Marrakech, the traveler knows, or ought to, that "the Victorious," "the Golden," El Mansour, himself, built that tower, with the assistance of a million Christian slaves, to be a monument not easily demolished to the splendor of Arab arts and arms, that is not to say that the traveler should see it larger than it is—in its "severity" a match for great mountains, for instance: nor that, just by itself, it constitutes more than a good tower, of a certain style. Also there is a better one near it—that of the Mosque of the Kasbah, beside the Saadian Tombs.—The ruined tower of Mansoura (two kilometers from Tlemcen) is, I think, more impressive, in its ruined state: all these works would be better as ruins. It is useless to claim for the Hispano-Mauresque more than a relative interest. Hispano-Mauresque is Arab. The Berber idea is much grander than the Arab idea. It is best expressed in that rougher *genre*—in the giant Atlas kasbahs. And those you do not see till you reach the High Atlas. Nowhere north of that is there anything approaching them in interest.

It was at Tlemcen that I saw my first *souk*: and souk is "market," or, in this case, "bazaar." In a city like Tlemcen souk means bazaar, also the daily and weekly food and live-stock markets. The souks, or the bazaars, a chaplet of fly-brown shops are, as elsewhere in the Orient, the main feature of Berber or Arab life.

Souk is an Arab word: the sound in Arabic is not "sook"—there is a complicated guttural tail to it.

But the French have made this sound into "souk," as the nearest they could get to the original.

In English I have seen this monosyllable variously spelled. On the analogy of "Sus" for the French *Sous*, it is often spelled "Suk." Also I have seen it "Sok." The first looks much more like the sound of "suck" than the sound "sook," the second "sock." You miss the "oo" sound. Similarly if I spelled the French *Sous* as "Sus" (they sometimes spell it that way too, only with an accent on the u—"Sûs"), it would merely confuse the general reader, and make him think it was something to do with *Jew Süß*.—It is such considerations as these that have caused me throughout to stick to the French spelling, for these sounds often have no equivalent in a European tongue, and a conventionalized spelling is necessary.

The combination of lethargy and incessant movement is the first thing that strikes the traveler in these Moroccan bazaars, should he be as I was a novice in the Oriental picturesque. They are narrow cobbled lanes, often steep as well as winding, meandering in all directions, ending in covered markets; or they are open-air workshops doubling upon themselves, disappearing into tunnels or losing themselves within the lofty walls of private gardens. People swarm in them, and winged insects, especially where there are food stalls; mules, camels and asses, with sacks of salt or flour, pass up and down them, or sometimes a merchant on horseback, with the great peaked saddle of the Berber, so different from the Arab one (though

the horse must be Syrian, and not a "Barbe," if the rider is to be pleased with himself).

The shops generally are cupboards in a mud wall. They start two or three feet from the ground. In these the merchant squats or crouches, often asleep or dropping to sleep, or if awake majestically resigned as regards the customer-question. The customer-question has been solved by Islam. That is left in the hands of Providence. The shopkeeper appears to have climbed up into his shop and sat down there, rather because it had been the Will of God that he should play his brief part upon life's scene as a merchant in a bazaar, than animated by any feverish desire to sell something. Even the Jews in the Mellah seem tarred with the same brush, and have the air of whiling listlessly away their time—though I dare say underneath they are aching to effect a sale, and live up to their reputation. But they do not show it, they act the same as the Arabs and as though Fate were their God as well.

On the other hand, the Producers (carpet-makers, cobblers, potters and so forth) work very hard. Someone after all has to *make* the beastly article—Fate decides who it shall be. Only, once the thing is made, it passes into the hands of an indifferent guardian, rather than an eager salesman. It is expected to sell itself. It sells or it does not sell, at all events: if it sells, it sells; no one is in the least surprised when it sells, nor disturbed when it doesn't.

This great rule of massive mercantile indifference does not apply to the large establishments of the big



The Berber women of the mountain tribes are more vigorous and independent than their Arab sisters. They come to market with their faces uncovered.



In the market places of Moroccan cities, magicians and story tellers welcome
all who care to gather about them.

rug and curio merchants. They, or their scouts, dart screaming out upon the visitor. Their emissaries lie all day long outside the European cafés, and when a new person drops in to drink they go in after him, and get him. Rug after rug is unrolled—some so large that they stretch right across the road to the opposite pavement. But these are people who have learned restlessness from the European, who is their main customer for such goods. Also their shops, at the heart of every Medina, are doubtless the cells, the small *succursales*, of some well-organized Levantine concern, having its headquarters in Tangier, or perhaps in Alexandria. They probably stock anything from a miniature Pharaonic *cartouche* to a wax-inlaid *kiff* pipe.

Fanning the flies with a palm-fan then, a bearded personage sits impassibly, legs under stomach, behind a pair of scales, prepared to sell some *couscous*, healing herbs, goat's meat, or what not, if asked—that is the rule of the bazaar. When no one arrives he may crawl out and put down his shutter, or else he may go to sleep upon the spot. When it gets cooler he wakes up, palm-fan in hand. Meanwhile incessant swarms of silent and athletic tribesmen pass, occasionally saluting a friend, with the *Hush*-gesture of the finger to the lip, without looking otherwise to left or right. Up and down this tortuous and stinking lane, the rocky bed of a mountain torrent as Burton described it, the phenomenally silent inhabitants of the bled pass from morning till night.

That is, of course, "the Eastern bazaar," which has

been so often described before. To see it is a first-class "Islamic sensation." As a sensation it is to be warmly recommended. I am told that the sensation is more truly Islamic in Morocco than even in Damascus, I dare say than even in Mecca.

It is naturally delightful to be in a place where industrialism has not put its squalid foot. Here it has not. You can see the ornate saddles and harness used by the rich merchants and notables cut out and sown in a workshop open to the street. In the same way the shoe factory does not supply the *babouches* as yet. All Berber footwear is made where you can stand and watch the phases of the workmanship, until there it is ready (if you are a Moroccan, or have gone native) for your foot.

Luxurious slippers, for great notables, their wives or well-paid prostitutes, have the traditional patterns being sown into the flat sheet of Moroccan leather before it is attached to the silken welt. These consist of patterns as invariable as the tattoo spirals and constellations upon the skins of the Mauresques.

There are of course factories. I was taken through a dædalian labyrinth of passages and courts, and so into a large carpet factory. Upon three sides of a courtyard were ranked looms. The large wooden looms are like the up-ended frames of big English spring-beds. At these upwards of a hundred girls, of thirteen or fourteen, in a profound hot hush, a stagnant studied gloom, manufacture rugs. They sat or stood before the looms as they worked. This was a

very large workshop or factory, certainly: but none of the oppressive hustle and slickness was to be noticed of "the Works," when it is the Machine that is paramount. These fat brown children, the Fatmahs of tomorrow, occasionally whispering, made far less noise than a single gramophone, playing a waltz with a soft needle. One of the outstanding "Islamic sensations" of Maghreb is the absence of what the coster calls "loud-mouthed"-ness.

No argument is possible, I think, when these two modes of life are contrasted. At a period when man has not been powerful enough to transform the accidental dispositions of nature—with no dynamite to blast, or rock-drills to disintegrate—and is compelled to build the streets of his cities in and out and up and down, inventing, as he goes along, untried architectural devices, delightful deformities and structural freaks, then, it is but too plain, the result is more agreeable and stimulating to the eye. By following the vast, non-human lines of nature, our human arts score their best successes. Projecting his tortuous, not yet oppressive, geometry out upon the chaotic superstructures—being methodic where he can, in the teeth of natural disorder—man is seen at his best. He then produces something of intellectual as well as emotional value, which the unadulterated stark geometry of the Machine Age precludes. Without arguing pro or contra—whether some day the Machine will be put in its place—it is sufficient here to affirm that the labyrinths of these ancient souks are far more imagina-

tively pleasant places to be in than is, say, Hoboken, across the ferry from Manhattan, or (on a small scale) the Casa boulevards.

Passing from the subject of souks to that of kasbahs, I think that something else can be safely asserted. The appeal of the great kasbah—of the crowding, many-towered, silhouette of Animiter, for instance, facing the Sahara—that is the same as the appeal of the swarming skyscraper. “Downtown” New York is from that point of view really the blood-brother of Tagontaft or of Animiter. But the kasbah makes the greater impression.—I have however gone on ahead of my itinerary—there are no kasbahs at Tlemcen, only souks. I will take up this theme later, when rising out of the souks of the plain (the vast walled souk, which is all that Marrakech is in fact) we ascend into the sun-baked Atlas valleys and first come face to face with the incredible many-towered castles of the great Berber lords. But that is such a special subject, and might, I have felt, be of so little interest to the general reader, that it will form the subject of a separate volume, which I shall call *Kasbahs and Souks*. I recognize that my great interest in the Berber kasbah is in part a technical one. I noticed in *Maghreb el Aksa* that even such a sensitive observer as Mr. Cunninghame-Graham dismisses the Berber kasbah (that of his host of Tagontaft) in a few words. And I could scarcely expect the average reader to be more easy to interest at second-hand, than was the distinguished Scottish nationalist when face to face

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with these tribal structures. This will fully explain the hiatus where the kasbahs of the Atlas are concerned. I shall often mention them of course. But for a detailed consideration of their significance I refer you to *Kasbahs and Souks*.

CHAPTER X.

IMPORTANT INTERIORS

ANY guide in Tlemcen has his path made smooth—he does not have to be much of a guide, all he need do is to go out and wave his hand and some “sight” for the sightseer is sure to be there as though he had conjured it up. Yet a guide you must employ, otherwise you cannot get inside the baths and brothels and other important interiors so easily. Also you must have the things explained to you. You discover, say, a small female child in the middle of the road, stock-still, grasping the ends of two pieces of stout thread. These disappear into a dark shop beyond. It is perfectly useless to follow the thread: ultimately you would find, fifteen feet away, in the obscurity, a man at the other end of the threads, working with them upon some garment. But you have to be told, or so I found it, how he requires the child to hold the two threads in order that he may be able to sew the cross-pattern of the elaborate hem of the men and women’s silk jackets, ceremonial vests and the rest.

But now for some *important interiors*—for in the Mohammedan East you must contrive to enter behind

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the rebarbative walls or battlements. The fondouks, they are most important interiors. You must get into these interiors. A fondouk is an inn (the Spanish *fonda* must be the same word). There is a large gate and massive arched entrance, in the shadows of which, in the poorer fondouks, men sleep wrapped up in their hooded cloaks. An Arab coffee-shop is installed there too. Within it is a courtyard that is in fact a stable: generally full of animals, mostly asses and mules. A stairway leads to a balcony: that is above the court—it runs all round. As there is no roof, and no walls above the well of the courtyard, this balcony is what would be the passage: the bedchambers of the guests open upon it. These are of course rows of unlit boxes, crowded with visitors from the bled. For the Berber never ceases to move up and down, and a fondouk is a profitable concern, I should say. Eight and nine people sleep in a room, bringing their own rugs for bedclothes. This, at twopence a head, is good business. In Tlemcen there is a fondouk for the Gipsies. There you observe numbers of this “reactionary” tribe of picturesque Hindu peddlers, encamped in an inn. A paradox—for why the Gipsy should wish to have an inn at all I was not able to find out. (Why not the bled?) Beneath the enormous shadow-filled arch of the fondouk of the Gitanos coffee was being made, the berries grilled over the brazier in a ladle, and people with the same stony milky stare, that these very especial nomads have wherever they are met, were drinking it out of miniature cups. My second night in Tlemcen I went into

a fondouk that was full of Riff tribesmen: they were singing upstairs in a largish room. But there was a great commotion when I entered, sleepers swathed in white rose out of the shadows like the medieval dead in their shrouds, and approached me in surprise. There was a great deal of unnecessary hurrying about. The song stopped, and so I left. I felt a few words of Berber were necessary and I knew none. That was a failure. There are fondouks of all grades, but the average costs a few sous a night. You must get into a fondouk: the morning is the best time, when it is comparatively empty.

The Moorish bath—that is an extremely important interior, you must at all costs find out where it is and enter it. People spend the night there as they do in the fondouks—it is both a bath and a fondouk. The atrium, a square block of bluish gloom, of this bathing and sleeping house, decidedly affords one of the short-cuts to the secrets of Barbary.—It is of critical importance to get into the bath. Only Moslems are supposed to enter, in the stricter Morocco.

For this book, I have placed a ban upon the Berber brothel. You do not have to have traveled far, out of Folkstone or Harwich, to know that “brothel” does not spell license, more than does any noisy café. It is merely a café, or pub, where the visitor may sleep with the waitress or barmaid, probably, if he likes (but he does not necessarily desire to).

In that respect it differs little, surely, from most cafés and pubs. So of course it is only for an Anglo-Saxon audience that a writer is compelled to ban these

institutions, as being not fair sociological game. I still may venture to say, to any serious student of the place—though the recommendation would be quite unnecessary, that it is understood, with such an investigator—you must get inside all and especially the cheaper ones! They are all *important interiors*. They cannot be looked at from the outside—there is nothing to see. They are packed with “Islamic sensations.” If you only have, say, forty-eight hours at your disposal, then it would be best perhaps to stay at the bath. Go straight from the station to the bath. Having chosen your mat, go straight to the humblest brothel. Apart from a sortie to the synagogue, and a crawl round the worst souks in the morning, that will be all that is strictly necessary. (Always avoid the Medersas. They are Hispano-Mauresque bores of buildings: or if you visit one you have seen all—go once, it is enough.)

He who has not seen the handkerchief-dance, for instance, now—the shuddering feminine body covered with bangles and charms, gradually working its way down the room, upon its pounding naked feet, that retard it as much as they advance it—the handkerchief held taut, before the breast-plated busts, alive with vibrations: but more important, the motionless male peasant audience, gravely expressionless, and then the regulation sticking of a small banknote upon the sweaty temples or on top of the tattooed eyebrows—the lowered eyes heavy with black kohl—while the dancer abaisse herself in a traditional curtsy (to receive what was formerly a coin upon the glutinous

skin, dampened with her gymnastics) —not to have seen this is to have missed the spectacle of an essential ritual, peculiar to this people. But I need not insist.

Wot else? (As Ezra says, before finishing a hasty note.) I do not say that the synagogue is an *important interior*, but I should go there, it is best to get into it: you certainly should understand the Jews better then. What a disconcertingly sensible race! You can enter their prosaic little temple with your hat on the back of your head and a cigarette in your mouth—*they* don't mind! It is so much part of their everyday, almost domestic, life, they are so familiar with the godly, that they would as soon show you the place where they pray as the place where they cook, or kill their chickens—for them it is all the same. They are such *professionals*, such born religionists, that they leave their tabernacle open upon the street, as if its four walls enclosed nothing more than a few chairs—or as if, rather, no mere human walls *could* enclose much more than that. *Privacy* is the enemy, perhaps (no man shall be closeted with God?). In scorn of the solemn Moslem prigs round the corner they prove themselves the most offhand worshipers on earth. I have not seen them on Saturday, but their nonchalant devotions have often been described: there they all sit or lounge about apparently, some of them nasally humming a little, while others gossip about business—the fall in the peseta, or the price of wool. It sounds like a very very mellow Quaker conventicle. *Sans façon!* says the Jew. For such past-masters in

religion it is almost like an outrageous swank.—Yes, it might be worth while to give the local synagogue the once-over. I regretted I was not able to drop in on Saturday, leaving Tlemcen as I did in the center of the week.

The mosque, although you have to take your shoes off, and the place is dark, is of a most puritanical bareness, and thoroughly uninteresting, without the agreeable *sans-façon* of the Hebrew temple. Not an important interior—though it has to be walked round for the say-so. All the powerful “Islamic sensations” are elsewhere. The *koubahs* the same—*koubah* is a saint’s tomb—a white-domed cube: they swarm everywhere—they are all the sanctuaries of Andalusian saints, expelled from Spain, and all date from the time of the Arab expulsion. *Never* fret because you cannot get inside them (it is forbidden). There is absolutely nothing inside!

CHAPTER XI.

THE RIFF

FROM Tlemcen, the passenger train goes no farther than Oujda. After that you must proceed by motor-bus to Fez. The road lies through stony tufa-steppes—salt, sand and rock—system after system of barren mountains. The *Minerva* set out at 2 o'clock, and reached Fez about 8. All the afternoon and evening we went on at top speed (to keep the lead of other buses) always through desert plains, flanked by the mountains of the Moulouya and those closing the Riff in the south.

The river Moulouya crosses this route halfway between Fez and Tlemcen. This, it seems, has been generally recognized, at all times, as the conventional frontier of, on the one hand, *Maghreb el Aksa* (that is, Morocco) and, on the other, *Maghreb el Ouesti* (that is, Algeria).

It was across these deserts that the Spanish regiment, during the war with the Riffs, escaped in a headlong scuttle to safety, arriving without arms and practically naked at Oujda. The Berber thereabouts still has a good laugh over that. The French have

never afforded them such mirth-provoking exhibitions!

Many reports were current in the Moroccan papers in May and June of 1931 of the recrudescence of the traffic in arms. In Oran I read a Spanish account of the alarming extension of this particular contraband. *The Riff is arming again!* That was the cry. Gordon Canning, the famous English filibuster, had been signaled at Gibraltar. That spoke volumes—for the Spanish of Tetouan, and, for that matter, for the French. Wherever Gordon Canning is, there you get a brisk *va et vient* of cases of cartridges, carbines and Mills' bombs! For them, this Englishman was directing, as before, the flow of contraband. Every night a flotilla of small craft, under the cover of darkness, left the Spanish shore, and landed cases full of arms and ammunition upon the coast of the Riff.

It was then (May, 1931) and is still, I suppose, punishable with death for a Riff to be found with a rifle. But the Republican Government, especially with Prieto there, would hardly allow their generals to give effect to such reactionary decrees. The general who was a recognized model man-of-iron—a "strong man," a stonewaller of the old school, with a touch of Asiatic, "dago," barbarism—was still in the Riff. He was credited with exhibiting the heads of decapitated Riffian rebels in the market-place of some big center, I forget which one. But it was unlikely that the new régime would encourage him to keep order with such thoroughness. (In June a civilian colleague was sent

out—to keep an eye upon him, no doubt.) If order could not be maintained without barbarity, it is certain that Republican Spain (that of the “Workers Republic”) would prefer to abandon Africa.

In Morocco I have listened to many conversations upon this subject, of what would happen were the Spaniard to leave the Riff. The British Foreign Office, I am told, have tabulated, among the dozen likeliest causes of great wars in Europe, the withdrawal of Spain from Morocco. The French, it is believed, would then march on. But that might quite well precipitate a war between France and Italy. It is one of the danger spots, the Riff. And although the quantity of arms entering the Riff every evening—the Spanish authorities at Tetouan said they had positive information that enabled them to estimate this at roughly 500 rifles per night—was, all agreed, exaggerated, nevertheless, since the day when Alfonso cried *Viva España!* as with an elastic step he boarded the Spanish cruiser at Valencia after his flight from Madrid, there had been a warlike bustle throughout the mountains south of Ajdir.

These mountains to the north were beginning again to bristle secretly with rifles; and I followed upon a map, as we rushed along, the black outlines of this ominous geography. Afghanistan and the Riff must produce much the same sort of human wolf: nothing I should imagine has a less reassuring air than a busful of Riffs, such as you see rushed into Tlemcen for a day's shopping. The Riff is swarthy and hollow-

cheeked, tall and phenomenally lean, inclined to be toothy and with that fixed mesmerized look of children often. He is evidently a machine—truly “a fighting machine” in the literal sense—a murderous, child-like, clean-shaven or bearded mahogany automaton.

Now, as I am writing this, it is reported that Abd el Krim has escaped from his island, and has been signaled off the Riff coast. He will soon, once more, be sending his envoys to Rabat, Fez and Tetouan, and also to Geneva! But I expect this escape is apocryphal.

The red tufa-steppes between Oujda and Taza illustrate the irreclaimable salt barrenness of this country. The name of the main river between Oran and Tlemcen is Rio Salado; and that is not the only *salt river*. Salt, indeed, is everywhere here, both in the earth and in the water. The whole of Maghreb is saline and desertic at bottom. It is only in the neighborhood of the big cities that you meet with methodic cultivation. At Tlemcen the irrigation works, responsible for the olives and vines, is the work of the Romans, in the first place. Sagniat-er-Roumi they call the canal system that brings the waters of the cascade at El Ourit over to Tlemcen. The attempts to reclaim this desert country are not likely to succeed. More and more the French are of the opinion that the only profitable form of cultivation in Morocco is that of *trees*, certainly not crops or vines. Gardening, not agriculture, is the cry—then wholesale *tinning*. Fresh fruit is too difficult to ship, they say.

Fez, where I stopped some days, is a mass of souks.

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Tlemcen or Fez, in the matter of souks, is much the same, though Fez is larger and less altered by the European than Tlemcen, and so better from the point of view of the souks. There is much Merinide art, if you like that.

CHAPTER XII.

CASA

CASABLANCA is a huge marine outpost of Europe. It is the last city of the coast to have a railway this side of Senegal—beyond it, traveling south, you must go by car. It is the Queen of the Atlantic for the Vieux Marocain, it is *Casa la Blanche*—or so its corps of journalists invariably refer to it. It is a hell of a *stink-fein* city in fact, and deserves more than a passing mention. Casablanca was the first town of the French Protectorate: the Moroccan conquest started there. As it appears today, it is pointed to as the city Lyautey built—it is the last place he saw when he left Morocco for good in the *Anfa*—it is “the pearl of the French Renaissance,” emblematic of the precarious post-war power of France. It is perhaps the place that holds the secret of the destiny of this astonishing latter-day colonial conquest.

The history of Casablanca, or Dar el Beida, is not important. It is an ancient settlement, for some reason—the *Anfa* of the Phœnicians; though why it is difficult to see, since it is the world's worst natural harbor, with nothing to distinguish it from any other point

of unindented coast-line south of Rabat. It is cursed with an abnormal surf: it has an abordage calculated to prejudice any mariner against it.

Here is a description (by Dr. Arthur Leared, *Morocco and the Moors*) of how you got into it about sixty years ago. The morning of Dr. Leared's arrival, in the Tangier packet, a strong sou'wester was blowing. "The roadstead is quite unprotected," he says: "a heavy sea was rolling into it from the Atlantic." Vessels with passengers and cargoes for the different coast towns often had to pass Casa, after perhaps laying off for several days in the hope of getting in, owing to the hopeless weather conditions prevailing at this most unlikely of spots for a port, and go on to Mazagan or Safi.—On this occasion, as the doctor says, "it was long before any boats put off to us, and when they did arrive there was another long delay; for we had to summon resolution to get into them, and to parley as to the exorbitant demands of the Moorish boatmen. No wonder that these fellows ask to be well paid for their perilous work. It is no uncommon thing on this coast for boats to be upset and lives lost in the tremendous surf. What makes the idea of being upset particularly unpleasant is the presence of great numbers of hammer-headed sharks, as these voracious creatures abound all along the coast. Only a few months previously, four masters of vessels that lay in the roads, three sailors and a Moor, were drowned by the upsetting of a ship's boat. . . . At last we left for the shore, and my first impressions of an African surf are not to be forgotten. Once within

its clutches, it was a neck-or-nothing game, and if ever delay was dangerous it was here. Watching the opportunity while outside the seething water, the men impelled the boat with their utmost strength on the crest of the ingoing wave. The tremendous velocity gained by this impetus caused, for an instant, the boat to rise high in the air on the swelling surface, and as suddenly dip down the sheer descent of the subsiding water. This was the critical moment; for were not the crest of the next wave as rapidly gained, that which followed inshore would swamp the boat. The wild excitement of the scene beggars description. With wild shouts and frantic gestures, the *reis*, or captain, at the helm, urged the crew to renewed exertions; and they, straining every nerve, yelled like madmen in response. Some Jews in the boat cowered down and looked like lifeless bundles; but though the foam dashed over passengers and crew alike, we were all, thanks to Moorish strong arms, soon safely landed, and with no greater inconvenience than a thorough wetting."

A Vieux Marocain—which means a colonial of a dozen years standing—told me that when, as a small boy, he landed at Casablanca for the first time (in 1914, I think) he and his parents, sisters and brothers, were carried ashore through the breakers on the backs of boatmen. And today at Safi ships are loaded in the same manner: chains of men, standing up to their waists in the surf, pass from hand to hand the cargoes coming in or going out, which are then rowed in open boats to the anchored ship.

The Casablanca, or Dar el Beida, of 1870 is described by Dr. Leared as "the dirtiest, most tumble-down place even seen." A still more emphatic observer, writing in 1889, describes it as follows: "Casablanca occupies a flat low-lying piece of ground close to the sea; the houses have not a single feature worth remarking; the principal street is a running sewer of filth . . . the people are more ugly and dirty, the donkeys worse treated and more mangy, the dogs more numerous and repulsive, and the beggars in greater numbers and decidedly more importunate and loathsome, than in any of the other places we had yet seen." (*Thomson.*)

At that time it was a township of 4,000 inhabitants, surrounded by walls of *tabia*, or mud concrete, twenty feet high, well supplied with water, but often visited with cholera and plague—the former killing as many as a dozen Jews a day. Owing to the uncomfortable harbor-bar at the mouth of the river upon which Rabat stands, a good deal of the export trade of Rabat—wool, carpets and wax—was shipped from Casablanca.

There is one respect in which the Dar el Beida of 1870 is reminiscent of the Casa la Blanche of today, and that is in the prevalence of the dwellings of an auxiliary population of nomads. Thus Dr. Leared writes: "There are also many waste spaces. Of these not a few are covered with reed huts, in bad repair, in which, when we saw them, many Arabs, wretchedly poor, were encamped." These encampments of reed

huts, or their equivalent, are still everywhere to be met with, wherever there is an open space.

But whereas the physician who visited it in 1870 said of it that "The worst climate on the African coast could hardly show a higher rate of mortality," it must today possess one of the lowest death-rates in the world, for its climate is in fact excellent, and of course Europe has brought its drains and lavatories with it, all stinks are banished and middens frowned upon.

Dr. Leared describes "an Arab village" outside Mazagan, "made up of conical huts, which resembled the barley-stacks of an English homestead." These are the *nouala*: but they are black cones of a coarse thatch of sticks or of reeds, and remind the traveler at the first blush much more of equatorial Africa than of Sussex or Kent.

Drawing into the station of Fedhalla, which is a small port between Rabat and Casa, upon the Rabat side, the traveler finds himself in the midst of an enormous nouala-village of this sort; and, with its cactus hedges and the naked squalor of its dusky infants, he would not have to be very fanciful to suppose himself in Guinea or the Congo, rather than in a North African nomad-town. Nothing indicates that this is not Fedhalla itself: coming from Fez or Tangier the traveler will have seen nothing of the sort, except here and there (associated with tents) one or two of these thatch cabins: and he certainly could be excused for jumping to the conclusion that either the activities of the Colonial exhibition had shuffled the

African colonies in some manner (was not this perhaps an equatorial village bodily on its way to Paris, which got left behind, or settled down en route, finding itself too late?) or else that a different race dwelt here—perhaps a stray community of the Harratin, that is, the negritic stocks of the desert or Anti-Atlas.

The black beehive-villages, built in orderly rows, are met everywhere in the south of Maghreb el Aksa: unquestionably they have something to do with the prevalence of Negro blood. That a thatch cabin of the order found in the Upper Volta should occur in Central Morocco is as natural as that a Zenetic tent should turn up south of Tchad among the Massas.

The Negro shades into the Moor everywhere south of this. The Famous White Touaregs even, of the Hoggar, have a delicate measure of Negro blood—just enough to put a shadow in the white. The greatest of the Lords of the Atlas (the Glaoui, the M'Tougi) have it more plainly still. Many villages in the Anti-Atlas are already definitely negritic, and all the Saharan oases are populated by the Harratin, a negroid race (descendants perhaps of the most ancient people in the Sahara, the peculiar Blacks whose last retreat is Tibesti).

No bones are made about this inky blood. The sultans, and the great Cherifian families (their descent from the Prophet notwithstanding) all sport it without a thought. They have been visibly blackened with the blood of slaves—for this there is no help, in a society run upon the basis of the use of the black *Untermensch* to do the hard manual work: and it has

never occurred to anyone to call his neighbor "nigger" (in the way that one *rasta* will say of another "Es Indiol") for the excellent reason that in their vocabularies there is no such word. In the Berber and Arab tongues of Morocco there is no word expressing in any way what we mean by Negro. Apparently the shading-off has been so effectively *nuancé* that no such idea as that of a White and a Black, starkly contrasted, has ever presented itself to a Moor or Berber. They must surely have noticed the enormous ethnical difference between a "buck nigger" and a typical Berber. But if so they have been so little preoccupied with it as to find it unnecessary to make a new word for the phenomenon.—Indeed, in the plain of Marrakech ("the Plain of Morocco" for the men of the last century) and the Valley of the Sous, the Soudan is already there—already you have entered the Saharan World of the great steppes and deserts between the Noun or Tafilalelt and the Niger.

In contradistinction to all this, however, the Soudanese are conscious of *Whiteness*, as a thing differing from the Soudanese norm. They have their words to indicate a person upon the other side of the Color Line—not necessarily a European. A Berber for them would come under that head (unless, it is to be assumed, particularly negritic).

The nouala (or *kabbousah*—"caboose") is technically a cylindrical mud hut, with a conical thatch roof. Often the roof extends to the ground: then it is a ten-feet-high or more, dark conical dwelling, made of

branches and sticks, secured at intervals with hoops of the same material.

This nouala-town which you see from the train is, however, not Fedhalla, which lies out of sight of the station. It is merely an important nomad or semi-nomad settlement composed of many hundreds of families, come there to work. They come from anywhere, they are always moving around: it is the works going on in the port, or the fish factories, that attract them. First they pitch their tent. It is the low-slung black roof of coarse homespun cloth, made of camel and goat hair, palmetto and other vegetable fiber—high enough for squatting but not standing—that you see all over Maghreb. Next they prowl round and smell out the work and the money. If it is all right, they build a nouala. Others build noualas. If hundreds of hands are wanted, soon there is a caboose-city. If these sources of employment fail or slack off, or if they get tired of the place, they abandon the nouala (of course without the slightest hesitation—no one would regret a dark insanitary *caboose*): they load their ass and move on to any point of the compass they fancy. Then the same thing happens again.

These people come under the head of semi-nomad, I expect. They are of the same nomadic category as the *transhumant*—those who alternate between pastoral tent-dwelling, and highland village life.

The Berber is a foot-nomad. The Berber is a matchless walker. Mr. Cunninghame-Graham scoffs at this born foot-slogger, comparing him unfavorably with

the Arab (whom he pictures as always mounted upon a priceless and high-spirited steed). But I think it is a great pleasure to watch these romantic athletes, in Indian file, undoubtedly setting up, daily, desert records.

They should be trained for Marathons. They cover prodigious distances, it is said. It is nothing for a family, starting in the Sous, to go and do some harvesting in Tunis. Their brains are like those of animals, they photograph the desert landmarks; doubtless they know, too, the smells, and the characteristic geology of the soil—that must be their embossed map, which they feel with their feet—since they all go barefoot. Flint and broken glass mean no more to a Berber (especially transhumant) than to a good solid shoe. (The feet of dead Berbers should be utilized for shoe-leather.)

Everywhere, throughout the thousand miles from Oran to Casa, groups of nouala, or most often the low, dark-brown, nomadic tent, are met with incessantly. It is a chain of encampments—or strings of wandering families, pressing forward, in Indian file, with loaded asses.

Wherever there are mines, or farms, there are groups of tents, and occasionally rough cabooses. And, in this country where the day-laborer is a nomad, who pitches his tent against the field or mine he is to work in, the question that presents itself to the statistician is no doubt whether these people are “transhumant,” “nomads,” or, on the other hand, uprooted “sedentaries,” in search of work. No one, I suppose,

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can quite say, in such a fluid life. The sedentary is always apt, upon the slightest provocation, to become a transhumant. And the transhumant is more than likely to develop into a nomad. So what is the ratio of nomadism, what of settlement, must remain uncertain.

In Casablanca, for instance, there is a vast settlement that the French have named "Bidonville." It is a city within the city, in fact. It consists of small huts mainly composed of petrol-tins. "Petrol-tin Town" (a blemish in Casa la Blanche) is again a mushroom settlement of nomads, attracted by the dollars to be picked up in this Babylon of the Nazarene half-finished. Thousands of these petrol-tin dwellings already exist, day by day they are added to: they have streets and squares.

Bidonville is quite "sedentary." It lies in a hollow. Above it tower the dazzling white palaces of the *Quartier Reservé*—which could be called "Brothel Town" or, to make a joke to show you the idea, "Strumpetville." Let us call it "Strumpetville" to match "Bidonville."

By the "Petrol-tin Town," or "Bidonville," of Casablanca, one is irresistibly reminded of another excrescence of the same sort, recently described in the English newspapers, namely the sub-city, or shack-town, growing up outside Chicago. *Capitalism and Barbary breed the same forms*—but how odd! The world-slump that hit America with the velocity of a tornado, spewed out on to the streets millions of decent people, not necessarily passionately nomad. So

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many have gone to live in the "Bidonville" of Chicago, we are told: they are sardonic, they name the principal boulevards of their Hobo-city "Prosperity Avenue" or "War-debt Drive." Their hovels are numbered like the dwellings of any other town; they have their letters addressed to, say,

Mr. So-and-So,
No. 486 Hoover Road.

So the enthusiastic Frenchmen, who point to Casablanca as the "pearl of the French Renaissance," and emphasize that it is a great city upon the latest transatlantic model, could even, if they wished, adduce the existence of Bidonville, to make the flattering comparison even more apposite! It is a parallelism which is, however, in no way dishonorable for the French, for *their* "Hobo-town" is the creation of born nomads, who are, by choice, the inhabitants of a tent or a caboose. No capitalist laws could drive them out of these hovels. It is different in the case of *War-debt Drive*, in the Hobo-town upon the shores of Lake Michigan. *There* our White stock is being forced down into a semi-savage sub-world of the down-and-out, or Untermensch. It is being thrown back into Barbary—not invited to issue out of Barbary into the advantageous plane of the civilized European life.

Strumpetville is of course another matter. Both Bidonville and Strumpetville are typical of Casablanca, itself a mushroom city. When I described the houses of its Quartier Reservé as palaces, I was not dealing in hyperbole. I do not suppose that any Quar-

tier Reservé on earth is so sumptuous. With its own shops, gardens and so forth, it is situated, by some irony, cheek by jowl with Bidonville. Yet considering the two together—the cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces of the one, and the kennels constructed of petrol-tins (looking like a savage congeries of small barbaric shields) of the other, it is difficult to decide which in fact looks the more impermanent.

Casablanca itself is an enormous whitewashed fungus-town. Fifteen or twenty years ago it did not exist. One of its old-established hotels—its premier hotel, a place about the size of the Strand Palace—the Excelsior, a decade or so ago was not there. The Excelsior was built upon the bed of a river. This may have been the river that turned the wheel of the little flour-mill in the days of Dr. Leared. The river was in a ravine, and all “ravines” in Moroccan cities are shoots for refuse. So it was built, also, no doubt, upon a refuse-heap. There is a pump in the basement of the hotel: every day they have to go down and pump it out. Not many London hotels provide as good a dinner as the Excelsior table d’hôte: there is a first-rate American bar, lounges, great and small. Upstairs, in the passages, as full of incense as a caïd’s palace (as a result of the cigarettes of guests thrown into the cuspidors or trash-trays filled with sawdust, igniting the aromatic cedar wood) story above story, are luxurious bedrooms with bath, douche, etc. As a hotel it is in every way more “modern” than most London or Berlin hotels, beneath the Ritz class. But in the basement the water of the *oued* is flowing, and it has

to be pumped out daily, else, presumably, this Grand Babylon would tumble down, or the subterranean waters would rise and submerge the guests and their Porto Flips in the American bar.

Casablanca is a city upon the American model then. It is semi-skyscraping, "Block"-built, as modern as modern. An impression of kaleidoscopic unreality of the same order as that that disengages from the "canyons" of Manhattan, assails you as you enter it for the first time, a passenger from Europe (all allowance made for the inferior importance of this French colonial fungus, as against the staggering impressiveness of the externals of New York, seen from a Cunarder's decks in the early night by a London visitor). From both emanate the same unmistakable sensations of violent impermanence. But in Casa it is in some ways more striking, since the civilization it apes, namely the Mediterranean, is traditional, whereas the American is frankly upstart—it is the uprush of a New World. The "forcing" operation whereby Casa has suddenly come to be is, upon all hands, starkly apparent. Its shell, the dazzling balanced plaster walls, what are they, the suspicious traveler asks, but a gigantic architectural confectionary? Tap them, they must be hollow, or filled with marshmallow—certainly of a mushroom flimsiness, porous rag-pulp or paper-mulberry-hearted. In fact no one has been there long enough to saturate any cubic foot of it with his presence. There is no personality in its hasty palaces: this densely-peopled city might still be empty, for all the human aura with which it is charged. Organically

it is a hoax: here is not an organism, but a preposterous assemblage of discrete and self-sufficing cells, which would collapse at a touch, administered with force enough, almost anywhere.

All its inhabitants, too, are a huge scratch-population, blown together by a big newspaper puff from the four ends of the earth, gold-diggers in posh city-quarters, ten-a-penny filibusters in plaster palaces: the "big noises" in this mushroom metropolis are adventurers of a decade's standing at the longest—not like the old and crusted harpies of Tangier and Tunis: the biggest "men of substance" here, you feel, would, anywhere else, be straw-magnates, with big question marks against their names. So this half-caste, ex-legionary citizenry is, again, racially unreal. Its cohesion, such as it is, is its tongue, which is kitchen-French, little more (and even that will shortly grow to be a mere *saber*, full of German and Berber). What is it doing there all of a sudden then, Casa la Blanche in the midst of an ancient piratic empire—pretending to be a European "conqueror"—with all the white, impressive power it has brought together, or that has been brought together for it (that is nearer the mark, I think)? Will it not all as suddenly disrupt, escape perhaps with the hiss of a puncture, one fine night—one of the Thousand and One Nights of Arabian phantasy! Meanwhile the pseudo-paleface is far outnumbered by the dark faces come out of the bled: Casa is swarming with nomads, just as half its *soi-disant* permanent population are nomads of some

kind as well: it was built by nomads: perhaps one day it will be destroyed by nomads!

Such is Casa la Blanche.—But this fair city is the creation of Marshal Lyautey—that is a paradox, however. It is the bastard child, I fear, of that great governor, of that old Roman.

In a Moroccan newspaper I read the following story—I believe the writer was reviewing some book or other. It occurred in an account of the final unhappy departure of Lyautey from Morocco, when he was recalled in disgrace. I will quote the French of the newspaper text:

Le Maréchal vint s'embarquer à Casablanca sur le paquebot *Anfa*. Il prit un dernier repas à la Résidence. A table, le député Charles Reibel, de passage au Maroc, se trouvait assis à côté de lui. Lyautey ne parlait pas. Il était absorbé dans ses pensées. Tout d'un coup, il se penche vers son voisin et, de sa voix sourde et saccadée, il lui dit: Voyez-vous, Reibel, il y a une chose qui m'embête rudement . . . Je ne biterai plus de ville. . . .

Lyautey probably never said anything of the sort to the traveling deputy, or at all events in the manner suggested: Such "sayings" of the great are the apocryphal claptrap stock-in-trade, as a rule, of the popular biographer (that novel and fearful romancing parasite upon any life out of the common, or which can be called "great"). But he *did* build Casablanca,

though he should congratulate himself that it was not renamed *Lyauteyville*.

Four hundred kilometers farther south, there is another town, Agadir. That, we are told, is destined to be another city-by-fiat, of this fungus order. It is said that Lucien Saint, the present Resident, exclaimed upon some recent occasion: "Lyautey built Casablanca. I will build *Agadir*!"—And that I should think would be the last of these cities, if it ever materializes.

But we have seen Mr. E. F. Gautier describing Tlemcen as the only true *city* in Algeria—between Tlemcen and Tunis there are no real cities, he asserts, only these mushroom European *Trade Counters*, as they would have been called in another time. Because owing to our highly-evolved industrial technique, we can today run up a considerable city in a month or so, and pack it full of people overnight (they could be brought in air-liners and Zeppelins if necessary, like boxes of locusts), that is not to say that the result is in fact, in any profound sense, a *city*, any more than is a mammoth Boy Scout world-rally, with its city of pavilions and white tents.

The military genius of Lyautey, and of the French Arms, secured the Cherifian Empire for Europe, adding it to Afrikia: it is held down, and held quite still (except for an occasional kick) for Europe, by French Arms.

But "French Arms" are, as regards the rank and file, more German than French. That is one trouble. Morocco has as often as not been held by mercenaries.

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The Sultans have used Renegade Christian Guards, Black Guards, Kurdish and Persian mercenaries, everything almost. But it was never an ideal arrangement.

But, further, it is not specifically French civilization that is in enjoyment of this conquered land. As I have already said, there are not a large number of the purely French there at all, the majority of the "European" element is mixed, with no love for the French either, as you soon find out if you talk to them. I have not forgotten of course the great administrative ability (as well as military) of Lyautey: but he is no longer there, and then the sort of governments that succeed each other in France do not encourage, I expect, more than they can help, persons of his stamp. Certainly such soldiers as you find there are the most *French* people that France has at present to show: I like them very much: if left alone, they could be trusted to administer and police this country, as Lyautey showed the way (even to the best interest of the Berbers themselves too). But one cannot help feeling that Lyautey was a little of a "sport," a freak and accident: that he would have *built*, if he had had the opportunity—unlike Tachefin, who never thought beyond a Saharan mud-wall and a desert souk, at most a moment's shelter for a wanderer who lived by war, and for whom *city* was an ignoble notion, like marriage for a rake. The genius of this country repels the "builder," it may be that—just as the Tharauds describe Tachefin kicking off the roof which pious busybodies wished to place above his head. So a belated son of Rome, like Lyau-

tey, plants a good old solid Roman seed; but the thing springs up a weed of some sort, overnight, and will never flower at all in the Roman way.

For "European civilization" is no longer Roman, the Machine has no nationality nor is it a matter of hemispheres: and Maghreb is a desert, where nothing will ever grow except desert things. The military genius of the European is part and parcel of the past, I think that is self-evident, the war was the proof of it. It is a retrograde force. It still dreams its military and administrative dream, it is awfully useful for police-work, and all right in its place. But it is divorced today from the world around it in an absolute sense—a soldier, a great military administrator like Lyautey, is a throw-back: true to the military mind he had inherited, he built his castle in Spain (or empire in Morocco, the same thing) in the grand Roman style of his ancestors. An anachronism. Then the political riffraff and job-snatchers (pals of Oustric and patrons of the Bonnet Rouge) who had been watching his altruistic proceedings from the distance, biding their time, more powerful than he, spat in his eye and kicked him out of his castle and turned it into a bank. Such are the fortunes of war, in a world that has outgrown war, in which the soldier will never be honored again—however much he may yet be made use of and sometimes paid lip-service to—which of course would be magnificent, if a worse man were not likely to be honored in his place. But let us hope that will not be the case.

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A few observations are called for, as a consequence of the foregoing account of Casa.—The gamut of human advance is to the stable from the unstable—its poles—I take it. The most potent insult you can offer to a Riffian is to say, “Your dad died in his bed!” The Touareg has a proverb, “With the plow enters in dishonor!” These two races are evidently at the unstable end—the Riff is shown, by the specific nature of his touchiness, to scorn *peace*; the Touareg, *agriculture*. And the German tribesman of antiquity is said to have regarded with great distaste all towns, or any enclosed settlement. (Hence, they say, *Wander-vogelismus*.)

But our civilization, with the impetus given it by machines, is turning from the settled to the restless ideal—from “civilization” to “savagery.” The gist of my remarks regarding Casa was this: if you pitch a tent or project a skyscraper—if you camp in a Caboose-City or in a White-City run up overnight, or from one year to the next, that is all one, if you are of the nomad sort. The roving, versatile, American workman works a while in one place and then is apt to move on—he “guesses he’ll beat it”: and if you observed him “beating it” in his two-seater Ford, looking for work, you would be observing a transhumant of sorts, as truly as if you had beneath your eyes a family roaming the bled, though quite willing to get some mud and sticks and build a caboose, if it was made worth their while.

The French Protectorate in Morocco, then, is a great European enterprise—the last of that order, I

should think, that we shall see. An administrative genius, Lyautey, did it with his eyes shut, I should say—because it was his nature to behave in that manner, and the nature of those that worked with him: he was allowed to do it because you must have soldiers to make wars with (according to politicians) and when you have soldiers they behave automatically in that way when you're not looking, unless violently stopped—they (it is their second nature) indulge in martial alarms and excursions, bully niggers, encircle accommodating sultans, and before you can say Jack Robinson (if they happen to be great guys like Lyautey) come running back with an "empire" between their teeth! And then, of course, the old imperialist framework—the old sentiment of the *épopée*—was still there: such institutions die hard.

French Morocco is the last great European enterprise of that order, magnificently carried through by a great soldier—one of the last of the great European military figures. It shows the French at their best—as the humane, civilizing, most genially acquisitive of all powers, able and good-humored—something like what the Normans must have been, when mellowed a little by the benefits of conquest. But their protectorate is built upon sand, in every conceivable sense. The type of "European" who is running it is as unfixed, restless and incalculable in everything as is the nomad, semi-nomad, transhumant or only technically sedentary population he is invited to boss. All that is essentially stable is the military. They, however, are never left for long in the same place, lest

they should become attached to this or that *popotte*, city-quarters or outlying post—that is the great military principle of *change*.—And the civilization behind the military power, and upon which it depends, has made a virtue of disequilibrium. Must not we consider, then, this admirable outburst of the old French genius as in the nature of a *sand-castle*, built upon the sands of a desert, without the promise of much permanence: we should admire it all the more, because it must be transitory, and the last thing of that sort our society will witness. Can anyone imagine the post-war English building such a pretty empire, for instance, twice the size of Spain? What a pity that the whole world cannot be governed by such people as Lyautey! Instead, the *Barbarians* have taken to building! And we are returning to the hair-tent once again—"picturesque and poetical," as Budgett Meakin said, but the death of science and of art: "not an ideal life."

PART TWO

CHAPTER XIII.

MARRAKECH

THERE is no particularity of the City of Casa to which I need draw anyone's attention. I stopped there on two or three occasions, spending I suppose ten days within its whitewashed circumference. Most of that time was spent in attempting to undermine the colossal indifference of the French postal personnel to the welfare of the public—I was the public, for the occasion: and I could inform you of course that the large German café in the Avenue du Général d'Amade—upon which I invariably fell back when heavily repulsed at the post office—is much the best in Casa. So let us turn, with some relief, from Casa la Blanche to the "City of Morocco."

Up to a point, *l'un vaut l'autre*. All that can be said, upon the lines laid down in the last chapter, of Casa, can be said—indeed very often has been said—of the Capital of the South, Marrakech. It stands in a fifty-mile-wide stony tufa steppe, and is in fact nothing but a huge walled oasis, supporting a multitude of palms with the waters that come to it from the wall of the Atlas, at its back. The most populous

city in Morocco, larger than Fez or Rabat, Marrakech is yet a vast rendezvous rather than a capital. It is a walled-in converging point of nomads or of extremely restless peasants. The Brothers Tharaud refer to it as "this city of the South, which, in spite of a few fine remains, is still nothing more than a great camp of nomads"; or again they refer to it as "Marrakech . . . this immense *fondouk* of asses, mules and camels."

First of all, from the standard "Oriental City" of the north of Maghreb el Aksa, you penetrate, once you pass the thirty-second degree of latitude, into a more definitely African world. Dr. Leared says: "There was little to record of my first impressions of Morocco (meaning Marrakech) except its likeness to the Oriental cities I had visited. Most things, however, wore a more African tinge. The black race was more numerous here. . . ."

Everything, indeed, as this writer says, "wears" a far "more African tinge." As you pass from Casa into the South, or the Sous, you find yourself in that part of Morocco that is least affected by the European, in the first place, also (and that is more important) it has come less beneath the influence of the Arab, outside the direct administrative sphere of the cities, and of course the areas occupied by the Chich tribes. There in the South are to be found the densest souks, the greatest kasbahs, and a climate, too, which, approaching more to the tropical, brings in the banana and the date-palm as a natural part of the décor—

thereby heightening the "Islamic sensations," with great novelties for the northern eye.

Here in Marrakech the Saadian Tombs (ramshackle and ruined as that precinct is) are alone suggestive of a more settled society, according to the two Tharauds. They are a little piece of civilization in the midst of this indifferent Barbary, or its huge camping-center of dried mud—Marakeh or "Morocco." But, say these two quite readable brothers, "should you wish to find a sepulture made after the image of this already Saharan city," you must turn your back upon this little island of orderly beauty, "go a few hundred yards farther on, following a mud enclosure, and have a look through the planks carelessly knocked together of a miserable patched-up gateway. There, in the shadow of a fine apricot tree—beneath a few bricks assembled without art, and then slapped over with whitewash, which is scaling off in patches—lies Youssef ben Tachefin, who founded Marrakech, and led his hordes of veiled Warriors to the conquest of Granada and Cordova." This is indeed a tomb in keeping with the city. "Often pious hands have attempted to raise the walls of a *koubah* above his head: but every time that this happened the illustrious defunct, accustomed to the open spaces of the desert, of life beneath the tent, has kicked away the roof that it was proposed to provide him with, for his last sleep, for he wished for nothing above him, in death as it had been in life, except the roof of the moving leaves!"

So the great Almoravid, the first and greatest of the

Saharan princes who galvanized the Berber world with their desert energy, and held it together for a spell, lies buried under an apricot tree, beneath a few bricks in the wild oasis-city he founded over a millenium ago: and the city is the image of the man and of Berber life as well, in short of *Barbary*. That is what the Tharauds have to say.

But Marrakech is far more real than is the tall white city of Casa, fully organized upon the most ample industrial lines, all the resources of Western civilization contributing to its quick uprush. Then, again, Marrakech is a city after the image of Tachefin: but Casablanca, on the same principle, is *not* a city after the image of Lyautey, or even of France.

What the Tharaud Brothers say of the *revers de la médaille*—or the hot mud-city of the first nomad dynasty—may be accepted as fact as far as it goes; the other side of the picture, especially regarding the impressiveness of the Saadian Tombs, is another matter. There are a lot of long plain gravestones—they *are* like small stone boats, if you like, keel-up: and these tombstones are to be found in a couple of lofty, ill-lighted, chambers, à *l'Alhambra*. The Tharauds are thinking how all these sultans die a violent death, one after the other—one at the hands of his Renegade Christian Bodyguard when he was drunk, another through the agency of the same fine body of men when he was sober, another slaughtered by his treacherous uncles, another poisoned by a Barbary fig, at the instigation of a palace eunuch, and so on. They are perfectly right, as I have already

pointed out, to think like that: a man is a brute merely who does not. I thought of all that too as I looked at the stone boxes. Only when I hoped to see in them "a simplicity, a divine proportion," that should remind me of the greatest masterpieces, then I had to confess that where the Tharauds saw so much I saw nothing at all—little more than I see when I pass the monumental stonemasons in the Euston Road, before you get to Great Portland Street Station.

But there is another point upon which I think the Tharaud Brothers, and many others, are gravely mistaken. I refer to the assumptions behind their terms "civilized" and "uncivilized," as applied to what we find in Barbary. For me the polished and empty Hispano-Mauresque, the Andalusian art, is simply dull: it is, as someone has said of it, little more than a dazzling *luxury-garment* thrown over anything that can pay the price asked for the tiles, fretwork, and mosaic—mosque, palace, or Tolba School all getting the same mechanical adornment, the same one stock outfit. The sheer architecture at the bottom of it is nothing, or next to nothing.

This certainly is "civilized," in a Parisian way, but it is too narrow a definition. The finest architecture in Morocco is to be found in the High Atlas, according to my view. There the great kasbahs are splendid works of art, or at least very impressive works of art, however rough sometimes, in a very great tradition. And all the best of these kasbahs are built by a desert, or semi-desert, tribe, the Ouled Yahya. These people

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come from just north of Tizert. (Tizert is a *ksar* upon the Saharan slopes of the Western Atlas.)

But there is something else which makes the sort of statement I have quoted from the Tharauds particularly superficial. It is generally believed, according to the latest researches, that the best contemporary architecture in Maghreb is as a matter of fact the Saharan. Very little is known about the oases in the neighborhood of Tatta, since only two or three Europeans have ever seen them. But they are said to be particularly finely built. And Gautier (*Les Siècles Obscurs du Maghreb*) insists upon the great superiority of the type of building in the Saharan cities (Figuig and its neighborhood, for instance) to the Kabyle or other "sedentary" architecture farther north.

If we compare, then, the monuments of the Hispano-Mauresque with the adobe hovels around them in Marrakech, this very chic Turkish Bath Architecture would no doubt discover itself in the rôle of the polished gentleman over against an African hobo. But that in fact is not quite the contrast, all things taken into account, that a wider inspection would suggest. The Soudanese home-land of the Berber chief, Tachefin, was not necessarily quite the savage spot that the Tharauds and the rest assume it to be. On the contrary. There is every indication that the civilization of the Sahara was of a higher order than that of the Tangitanian Mauretania. The monasteries and famous centers of mystical scholasticism of Senegal and Mauretania were not, evidently, mere deserts full

of wild animals and untutored nomads. Mauretania, or what we call loosely the Rio de Oro, has been termed "the intellectual center" of Islam in the Berber world. There have at all times been cities and monasteries in those deserts as well as nomadic brigands. So Tachefin should not be regarded exactly as the chief of hordes of veiled brigands.—But I will take up this question again in a moment.

Even if you like the Hispano-Mauresque, however, there is not much to see in Marrakech. There is the famous Koutoubia, whose silhouette dominates everything; there is the Palace of Ba Ahmed—it is a vulgar descendant of the Alhambra, there is nothing in it that is not coarse and summary in workmanship. But this huge peach-colored adobe town must not be judged by its few Andalusian remains. It must be judged, on its own merits, as something like an immense human personality.

Marrakech is indeed "the mouth of the Sahara" as it is described by Graham. It is a huge, red, windy metropolis of mud and sand. In the center of it is "The Place of Destruction" (*Djemaa el Fna*) which is a small desert in the midst of a city (as "a square" it is vast) full of the vigorous African crowds—acrobats, potters, Chleuh boy-dancers (like bands of depraved but still strictly-disciplined surpliced acolytes)—many sorcerers and palmists (before whom squats some silent mountaineer, drinking in the words of fate, while the prophetic quack holds fast the tell-tale hand, mesmerizing his victim as he whispers to him the secrets of the future) with, at the busy hours, a

city of fantastic tents. The tent-making capacities of the natural nomad are here seen to full advantage, in the structures of mats and poles, which take the shapes of a pachydermatous beast, or hollow carnival giant, sheltering the salesman and artisan—cobblers, locksmiths, couscous vendors, herbalists, butchers, letter-writers.

The Djemaa el Fna has often been described: half a century ago it must have been in most respects the same as today, except that the unlovely post offices (of a Moorish operetta type) and the slick Paris-Arab pastiche that it is considered necessary to indulge in when building a bank, does not improve the view. The large café in one corner of this Djemaa el Fna affords a select, arcaded meeting-place for officers and Berber notables: the great caïds, it is said, go up to the roof if they wish to indulge in an extra drink or two, so as not to be observed by their tribesmen: but the "Islamic sensation" is necessarily lessened by the presence of this commanding European building. Also much of the dancing that used to occur in "The Place of Destruction" has been, since the French Occupation, driven underground, or persuaded to remove itself into houses set aside for such strange African licenses, which is a pity.

Still the desolation of cracked mud and sand, endless fine upstanding palms, loaded with dates, miles of these plumed plants—everywhere, wall within wall, peach-pink mud-concrete battlements, of which earlier travelers speak, is still perfectly intact. "This heap of ruins, sand-heap, desert-town"—this "city of the

Mahdis, halt of the Sultans of the South, on their way to capture Fez"—has not capitulated to Europe, it is still the "Morocco City" of Dr. Leared, or, last and worst of all Black Viziers, of Ba Ahmed. "Morocco City is purely African," says Mr. Graham; and that is it after all. Those "handsome Arab types" so beloved of the traveled Briton (of Mr. Graham, of course) are conspicuous by their absence. There are no magnificoes, in this huge adobe souk, who hold as heir-looms the monster keys of the houses in Granada unwillingly vacated by their ancestors five hundred years ago. Marrakech belongs more to the Soudan than to Spain.

CHAPTER XIV.

FILM FILIBUSTERS

BEFORE going south of the Atlas into "the mysterious" Sous—a land so pregnant with plots and so overrun with lawless outsiders as to make a mere tourist's hair stand on end—before rushing for four hundred miles up and down the sides of mountains in a mighty bus, and at last dropping with a dull roar into the ocean valley of Santa Cruz de Cap d'Ager, the very home-soil and breeding ground of the essential filibuster (whose filibustering is the principal industry of the place), I will give some account of an important filibuster met with farther north—not in the Sous—namely *the Film Filibuster*. I fell in with a huge caravan of them at Fez. And then (in more aristocratic surroundings and in a much grander form—juvenile-lead and magnate rolled into one) at Marrakech.

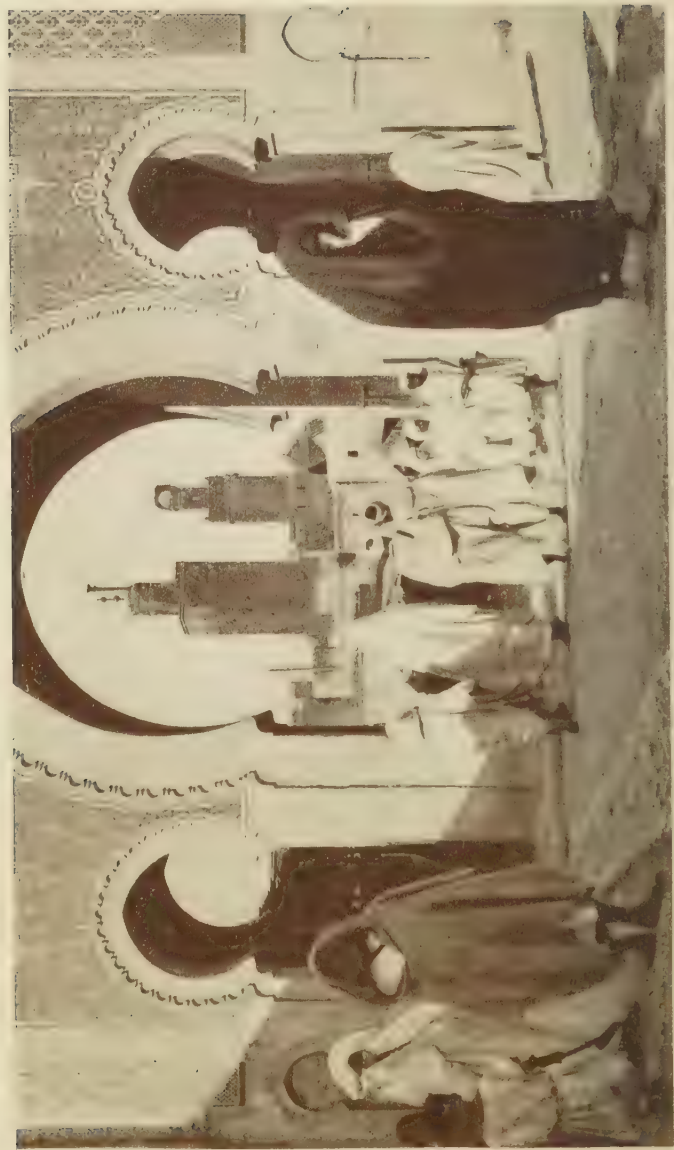
But if I take it upon myself to refer to the film-pro or screen-king as a "filibuster," it must be understood that I am casting no reflection upon his rectitude. At least, the ramp is elsewhere—the gulls are in the distant theaters, they are in such centers of civilization

as Chicago or Glasgow, much more than among the natives of Barbary—among whom the Ufa and Pathé magnates send their troupes (not troops) merely to afford their sham-sheiks a Hispano-Mauresque photographic setting. The whispering masses in the film palaces—it is for them that this description of filibuster filibusts—throwing up shoddy mirages, with his photographic sausage-machine, of the desert life—so falsely selected as to astonish into suspicion sometimes even the tamest robot. As to the filmable populations—true, this mechanical Vandal degrades them as he does everything he touches, but for the rest he puts many a lightly earned peseta in their pockets, and is a pure benefactor as far as that goes. And as to the Italian hotels of Barbary, it is difficult to see what they would do at all if it were not for those truckloads of queer fish brought from Paris and quartered on them by the gross. The touring film rabble make up for the absent tourist—the latter a rarer bird every minute, with every fresh oscillation of the world's exchanges and every fresh currency ramp or tariff wall.

At Fez, the Hotel Transatlantic was closed—it is open only for a few months in the cool season. Similarly all over Morocco these huge hotels were shut down—they are the “follies” as in other days they would have been called of a steamship company, I believe. The Grand Hotel, when I arrived, was open, but it was very large and it languished—it had been conceived to meet the booming requirements of a “Renaissance Marocaine” which has not materialized,



Fez lies within a valley encircled by massive gray-green mountains. It is still surrounded by massive ramparts surmounted by square towers and broken by magnificent gateways.



Fez, "The Sacred City," is famous for its mosques and medersas. It was founded in 808 by Edres II.

and for a volume of sightseers and filibusters far in excess of what can now ever again be expected. The enormous dining hall adjoining the café, with its numerous staff of white-jacketed Algerian waiters, its Italian managers, was perhaps a quarter full upon the first evening. Then upon the second day the train from Casa came in with all its compartments packed with a super sheik-film company. Its fifty-odd personnel poured in for lunch, and immediately the winter of our discontent was turned, at one blow, into glorious summer. These forty dumb characters in search of an author dumb enough to concoct a plot and text for them (accompanied by the sharp-shooters of the mechanical staff) swarmed forward, vociferous and replete with a strident reality that was so thin as to stamp them anywhere as screen folk—creatures, that is, of an art at one remove from the shadow picture. With all the prestige of this idiotic industry (as practiced in our Western savagery) they gave the hotel staff something to live for, and a scene of great animation was the result.

They swung (if of the Mix class), danced, shuffled, dashed, sidled, stalked or tottered in, each according to his kind: noticeably *two-by-two* (as if picked out into sex-pairs by an official Cupid) like the animals entering the Ark—for of course each of these stars, however impotent a one-candlepower washout (even according to box office canons), must, off the screen, move in a triangle of bloodshot adultery—to satisfy the business end of the racket—in order to suggest the bombardment of an anguished fan-mail—if to no

one else, at least to their fellow actors. Only one or two dared to be solitary, for however brief a period.

This company had come to Fez to enact a rather elaborate arabesque of kiss-stuff-crime-and-contraband-of-arms, to be called *The Three Unlucky Travelers*. My informant was a half-caste waiter—pock-marked and with the scars of several other epidemics as well to underline his attractions. But he felt himself nearer to the great dynamic heart of the universe than ever before with these people—he told me that he had been remarked at once by the film boss. At sight he had been engaged for a minor part. What part? Oh that of a blind mendicant, not an important part! They had *wanted* him to take a more important part, but he hadn't time. He wished in a way he had! They had asked him to go off with them when they moved on, to make one of them. Yes, they desired him to become one of them. But he did not see his way to do that. He could not be spared just now—so must remain at Fez.—At that moment one of the Three Unlucky Travelers (the Polish one, the least lucky of the lot) clapped his hands impatiently in our direction, and shouted for a straw for his ice-water. When the waiter returned to me (after watching for some minutes the star make use of the straw) he informed me that the one he had just obliged—who had just asked him to help him about a straw—was the first of the three to fall a victim to the spells of the magician's daughter (who was the leading lady) and to fall over a cliff. The cliff as it happened (by this time everything was shipshape—Fez had been ransacked sceni-

cally) was the other side of the Medina. It was a very big rocky lump, which the Fési has accounted for by attaching it to a local legend—it is supposed to be the colossal detritus of an indignant divinity, who was disgusted with the people of Fez, and took this rather objectionable way of showing it.

The Unlucky Traveler Number One was French, as was right and proper in a Parisian film. His was the almost matchlessly empty histrionic blend of attractions of the French Music Hall—those throaty troubadours of the Third Republic who mouth with a mealy sweetness the songs that are hawked in broadsheets afterwards by tenoro-guitarists in the provinces. Only I had been accustomed always to see that figure in a tuxedo. Therefore at first I was somewhat puzzled, for he considered an Aertex vest and canvas slacks sufficient clothing even for dinner in these sporting tropics, and in that form he was at once terribly familiar and yet absolutely strange. Of course so clothed his athletic proportions stood revealed, but they were pallid (as one would suppose the city songster's to be in spite of his cavemanly cawing and basso-profundo cooing). He looked in fact not unlike those half-naked bakers who occasionally emerge in pastrycooks' at the time the hot cottage-loaves are brought up from the subterranean ovens.

When this clumsy Hearty, the first juvenile-lead, entered the restaurant, he swung himself over to his place at table, as if in the atmosphere a system of massive ropes had been secreted—his torso, which was flat but very wide, swung in one direction, his arms

(which were a clerk's and not a blacksmith's—but large-boned at least, if innocent of muscle) swung in the other direction. And he remained at all times a man-of-the-hour, although he would not be “released” for a twelvemonth. If he went over to the kiosk, which stood in front of the hotel, to buy a newspaper or packet of cigarettes, he inflated his chest beneath the porous fabric of the Aertex beforehand—*then* he started: he swung across the road (again as if ropes upon either side of him, suspended in a fluid medium, led direct from café to kiosk). Unfortunate Traveler for six weeks (the troupe was to remain there for at least as long as that, they said) he was a most melancholy gymnast, his existence a footlight one, overshadowed by an epic struggle on the other side of the Medina—on the Tarpeian Rock—then out in the pitiless bled with a bloodthirsty sheik—never off-duty, compelled to remain stripped (to his Aertex) for the fray, by the etiquette of his profession. Did the poor chap ever relax? Did he in his bedroom relax, and become the clumsy, slouching clerk of his early youth once more—or did he sleep bolt upright, even in his sleep an Unlucky Traveler, with his chest stuck out three inches beyond the norm of its recumbent silhouette?

These simple universal problems (for the onlooker) are provided in common by all those who live by impersonating “unlucky” characters, cast for abnormal episodes, of great physical violence. But it occurred to me as I watched these film cattle that the stage actor, whose work is done upon a stage, and the

film actor, the backgrounds for whose work are the scenes of everyday, though they have much in common, must differ very widely in important particulars. The stage actor, for instance, could at all times be spotted out of the theater, in his non-public life. Likewise the film actor, but less so. For on the whole with the latter the actorishness must be of a more insidious sort. His artificiality has to be more intense, since the demands of the *real* everyday background are more exacting. In his professional displays the screen worker in the nature of things is the last word in *naturalism*, at the opposite pole to a formal art. His actorishness therefore (the stigmata of the trade of Makebelieve stamped into his features and attitudes) must be a distortion of a very common-or-garden norm, rather than the reflections of a transcendent, an abnormal, existence. The film man will tend to be a very intense, very slightly heightened Everyman, whereas the Garricks and Irvings would carry about with them in private the impress of successions of great Individuals, separated by all the arts of the formal stage play from that everyday nature of Everyman, which is the particular province of film photography.

The huge company that came to the Cherifian Capital to reproduce the great dime-dream of *The Three Unlucky Travelers* was conspicuously polyglot. One of the luckless heroes was a German, but every nationality was represented, even English. The spectacle of this cosmopolitan social organism taking shape beneath one's eyes was a mild diversion. They arrived

in a mere chaos of personalities upon the scene of the Grand Hotel. But at the end of three or four days they had separated out into well-defined classes. The Leading Parts (irrespective of nationality, age, salary or looks) sat at a smaller table. This became a sort of High Table. There was a second table for those not quite so eminent. But from this second table people were occasionally promoted to the first. This was usually as a consequence of successful love passages with a male or female of the first rank. This necessarily brought them into the charmed circle of Stars (if the love passages lasted, that is). But upon the first day of one of these adventures the couple involved in the new intrigue would separate upon arrival in the restaurant, and would go to their respective tables, according to class. Sometimes after a day or two at the High Table a Second Classer would have to return to Table Number Two, upon being superseded in the affections of the Star in question. There was therefore a constant going and coming. It was an evolutionary pattern, supervised by Cupid, the *motif* divorce, of course.

After four or five days a new phenomenon was to be remarked. A pair of important stars would roughly break away from the central tables, and go off into a corner by themselves—to a table à deux. At the end of the sixth or seventh day most were back again where they had started, in their original groupment. Others had, meanwhile, broken away and were to be seen with their heads together alone at a table, even perhaps going so far as to order a half-bottle of

rather better wine (say, two francs' worth of sauterne) than was supplied gratis with each meal, generally Algerian.

As two would come in—and, instead of going to their usual seats, according to class, at a common board, were observed to pass down the room and establish themselves in a distant spot—all the other tables would be in a fulsome momentary ferment—people would turn round and point, chatter and signal from one table to the other. In short, the attitude of all these people to their own actions—of “passionate” couplement and precipitate divorce, and then new couplement and further violent separation—was exactly the same as though they had been a crowd of *fans*, instead of a crowd of *pros*. They acted the fan for each other! Their shop was as much, or a great deal more, *publicity*, than it was the art of acting, that goes without saying. The goodlooker, not the good actor, would become the star. It may be regarded as certain that each morning a fan-mail would come up with the principal's breakfast. It would be composed and dispatched overnight by lesser members of the flattersome company. And from the camera staff such attentions would come particularly well no doubt. All day long the individuals of this herd were showing off to each other, attempting to convince the rest that they were “coming” stars, or if already by way of being stars, that *this* show would give them a place in the center of the world-spotlight, with semi-Garbo-like laurels—or recall the days of Valentino, when stars were stars indeed.

The quality of the female élite of the company I regret to say was exceedingly low according to any standards. They were all undersized, almost like another species, and their intense artificiality took the form of an odd degenerescence. In *forcing* the normal everyday reality, as it were—in compelling it to conform to what was certainly a vulgar average, but a particularly odd variety of the vulgarest commonplace—they suggested the exact opposite of the *heightening* said to characterize the finest art. Theirs was a *lowering*: but it was a descent so much below the average level as to be eccentric and extraordinary. Here were indeed the authentic *depressed* levels of the universe of the Untermensch, in all their blatant pretentiousness. Seeing that their departure from the norm was in the direction of a dwarfishness, an eccentricity, an air of impaired health—with the demented self-assertiveness of the *asphalt*-folk that they of course are, and the demented concentration upon *effect*—an impression (even necessarily) of a *degeneration*—from power, law, dignity and sense—was conveyed by their presence. It was as if some patently *inferior*—some less healthy, less excellently balanced, less beautiful—some half-mad midget people, were, father to son, film professionals. In Maghreb all the acrobats come from a particular tribe in the Sous—all the builders and masons come from a particular tribe in the Great Atlas; in the same way all the personnel of this film world might come from a certain district—say, in Galicia or in Czechoslovakia. One could imagine them as a diminutive, phthisic, gutter-

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people, who had started in gutter-theatricals, prospered, spread over the world (like the Berber tumblers of the Noun) caricaturing any eccentricity, or imitating any particularly brutal behavior on the part of the full-grown, "normal," master people by whom they were surrounded—falling in and out of love, to show that they were real and not just puppets, and even taking their desperate pretense of reality so far at times as to blow their papier-mâché brains out—a small vampire, or vampish—kohl-lidded, heterosexed clan—an important subdivision of the Untermensch—selecting for their imitations for preference Crime—some specializing in gangster parts, some in coke-addict parts, some in Lesbian rôles—some partial to blackmail, some to arson, some sticking to "straight" Murder Club stuff, some having patent side-lines of fancy homicide—but *all* violent—*all* guaranteed to be intelligible to the least talented, to the most adenoid-stifled gutter-infant, or to the lowest average level of city-serfdom—always the crudest box office "appealed" to—everything imitated by them to be vulgar and violent *de rigueur*. So, restless and keyed up to jazz-concert pitch, this swarm moved about the hotel; to overhear a dialogue in the elevator was to be let into a secret of the heart of a star. At the mere presence beside them of a stranger (a potential fan) they began talking feverishly, so that you should feel that when they passed out of sight a pistol would be fired—a pipe of opium resorted to—an illegal operation consummated—or (at the mildest and meekest) a fruity adultery be instantly

forthcoming. This "atmosphere of climax" in this great hotel became somewhat oppressive at last. It blotted out the Arabs finally, and made the Berber a little dim—I was of course grateful for the eclipse of the Hispano-Mauresque Babs and Minarets, Medersas and Mosques! They certainly cast a spell over the "capital of the Islamic world" as the Sultan's good town of Fez is often called. They swarmed everywhere—they whispered in the passages, danced in the café, wrote masses of letters and cards (to languishing fans) in the writing rooms, monopolized the bars.

The three he-men and their three he-friends were the principal American bar guests—one in puggaree and pipe, two walking advertisements for underwear—and then the three understudies of course to match, though exaggerating the absurdities of their principals—dressed in an inferior quality of men's vests, and with even an inferior quality of skin—though the latter was in fact somewhat of a feat, in the way of subordination!

The younger officers of the Fez garrison mingled on terms of equality and patronage with the film folk—not of course sitting at their tables, but occasionally inviting one or two to theirs—or often a film man would come up and sit down with them unasked, and they suffered this with a good grace.

I take it that this big film troupe was a second-rate French one, dispatched to Fez on the cheap, on a Cook's Tour basis—probably "done" by the hotel at ten francs per day per head, for six weeks—everything found, the least choice Algerian wine thrown in and

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glad to get rid of it. Trade was at an abnormal ebb—the Economic Blizzard must have emptied every hotel from the Bermudas to Bombay—and this ill-favored herd certainly filled up the place and gave it a spurious air of prosperity.

But it was at Marrakech that I was privileged to catch a glimpse of quite a different type of film-folk. There in the local Ritz-Carlton I found myself the fellow guest of a film magnifico. (I was of course traveling in the strictest incognito, and I am sure that he was perfectly unaware of my presence. I had the better opportunity, in consequence, of observing him.)

CHAPTER XV.

FAKING A SHEIK

TO NAME the personality in question here is entirely unnecessary. He *had* a name—it is a name that is “world-famous,” which has been bel-
lowed in the ear of the robot-rabble for over a decade. Producer, director, author, continuity man, supervisor, star—all rolled into one—he was rather unique. But it is a uniqueness in futility. To be *versatile* in a hundred such ways as those were, is very much what it would be to have a “world-wide” reputation for being able to play the *Marseillaise* on the piccolo, accordion, violin, Jew’s harp, oboe, piano and saxophone. To be so constituted as to be able, first, to scribble out six pages of a *Peg’s Paper* or *Gem Library* romance; second to be able to undertake the duties of the “continuity” hack (to expand the six-page story, puff it out, and then cut it into suitable breathless slices—a mosaic of nonsense); thirdly to possess the talent necessary to conceive (in the capacity of director) how a crowd of puppets could be made to carry out, scene after scene, the foolish injunctions of the continuity hack (as handed over to the script

clerk); further, to be sufficiently accomplished a moron to be able in person (having written the silly words oneself) to interpret them in the flesh, in short, to become a star—if to possess all this galaxy of undesirable gifts does not deserve *a name*, well, I don't know what does: but all the same it is a detail that can be dispensed with, I think. This kind of thing is widely advertised as a folk-art, and a folk-art is nothing if not anonymous. We do not know the names of the hundred million box office gulls who are this fellow's masters (however much they may be gulled), so after all why perhaps should we know this fellow's name either? It is immaterial.

Still this was no ordinary figure in the vast imitative Underworld of the Screen, and this was for me an exceptional opportunity of studying a "sheik" on the spot, as it were—of observing the sham article in process of manufacture, out of the raw material of the Real—the film sheik taking shape in contact with hundreds of authentic sheiks. And there is nothing more curious than to observe a person modeling a lie *from the life*—upon the breathing original—in an odd process of deliberate misrepresentation. It is the sort of work upon which the propaganda departments were engaged during the war—of always pondering how they could make a stupid lie out of some insignificant fact that came to their notice.—And *ponder*, that is what this sheik-faker was always doing in public—whenever I saw him he appeared to be deeply pondering—he pondered on his way downstairs, he

pondered in the hotel lounge, he pondered at his meals, he pondered all over Marrakech.

But this was not the last of his oddities. Perhaps the oddest thing about him from my point of view was that in spite of everything he was, or had the appearance of, a gentleman, or to put it in another way, notwithstanding his disgusting profession, he did not exude vulgarity, as did the film folk at Fez!

His record was a bad one. It seemed that this was by no means the first time he had come to the bled, to fake a sheik. He had formed the habit, *de vieille date*, of sheik-faking. He was one of the first men to fake a sheik—an old confederate of Valentino, and he had been in at the birth of this tradition. Every summer saw him prowling thereabouts—pondering—upon the extremities and fringes of the desert, plotting new “sets” of blood and thunder lollypops. But this was the first time, it seemed, that he had impersonated one of the principal characters himself. This was perhaps a turning-point.

He was thoroughgoing. They said he had become a Mohammedan—at least his publicity staff interpreted his fascination for Islam and for “Islamic sensation” in that way. For the public of sheik-fans at all events he was a follower of the Prophet. He had built himself a Berber *timgremt* or kasbah, upon the Riviera (where, no doubt, dressed as a Lord of the Atlas, he gave people their thimbleful of sweet mint tea).—Yes, not content with living amongst sham sheiks, false Black Palace guards, Mokhaznis and Viziers, for a few months every year, he actually

wanted to *be* a sheik forever—at last hoisted with his own petard and caught in his own trap! What an odd thing that was!

From the point of view of the French Colonial Authorities—the *Bureau des Affaires Indigènes*—this sheik complex must have been fairly handy, and this “sheik” of the Riviera certainly was afforded every facility to proceed with his vulgarization of the Berber steppes. When he built himself a kasbah in the Provençal bled (where of course there are a good few Berbers in one way and another), they must have been rather pleased than otherwise. It would be like an annex of the Colonial Exhibition. (If some idiot could be found to put up a Cochín-Chinese feudal residence in the same neighborhood—and another to install himself in a Sonhraïs temple-fort, with a Gambian touch or two—then the colonial publicity departments would no doubt regard the interests of France as well served by these visitors.)

This was the first big American film magnifico I had ever encountered. Fifteen years ago I had seen his first great hundred-reel wow. But he differed from most of the film kings in being, as I have already indicated, instead of an over-Jewish business man, an Irish-American of agreeable exterior and pleasant manners. Undoubtedly there was field-work for the psychologist here, if I had been such a person. I could see what a juicy little problem this would be for the professional analyst—namely, what obscure motives lay behind this strange decision of his—suddenly to come forward at what I judged to be some-

where round the age of forty (though a prepossessing, tanned, blue-eyed, healthy forty, as I have said) and concentrate the glare of all the Kleig lights, green-mercury lamps—the “scoops” and “wampus”—the “babies,” “suns” and “broads”—in his studios upon his own person—so far immune, as far as I know, from the life of the star. It was not that he regarded himself as an irreplaceable “caster” for the rôle of sheik—for as a matter of fact he had decided to play the part of a French subaltern. It must be something else. I idly wondered, as I watched this constantly pondering, a little ponderous, figure, going about its strange business: but I suppose the impulse that had led to this was a matter for an expert film fan rather more than for a psychologist—why this veteran, measured by the time-standards obtaining in the Film World, one who had witnessed and participated in all the most demented excesses of the vogue of Valentino (with Wisconsin and Idaho flappers blowing their brains out right and left upon the news of the star’s decease, in front of a signed photo of that rather oily waiteresque gentleman), why at this distant date from such epical events this wirepulling dictator should wish to take a hand himself in the sets, at the dead-end of the wire, where the automaton capers—and smile out in debonair close-ups, or prance in wistful middle-distance shots, for the benefit of a gum-chewing world-pit—was difficult to see.

Meanwhile here he was in the full splendor of official favor. The Rabat and Casa newspapers were full of his projected exploits. How he was to take his



The Moroccan wife's ambition is summed up in the first question she asks a foreign woman, "Have you any children?"



Patterns of light and shadow are formed by the trellis-covered streets typical of so many Moroccan cities.

absurd pack up into the gorges of the Saharan Atlas, and *hunt the sheik*—the national sport of America, as fox-hunting is that of England. A special interpreter—in the most spotless costume and brand-new, blood-red chequia—had been detailed by the Residency to accompany him wherever he might choose to go, attached exclusively to his person. And a few nondescript individuals who had come with him from France, to reconnoiter, and mark down fresh kasbahs to be *shot*, composed a select (unostentatious) retinue. In six months he was to return with a large company, like the one that had overrun the city of Fez, following upon what at present might be arranged between him and his technical consultants.

For his own part, he was quite reasonably dressed (as a cowboy—with khaki shirt, gun-belt, riding boots, etc.). But his lieutenants were in Aertex vests (or some similar make of sport-suggestive gentleman's hose) like the people I had encountered at Fez. His manners were gentle and pleasant, and one felt that had not this industry attracted him and conferred upon him an emperor's salary in early life, he would have been an agreeable fellow enough—handsome, healthy and unassuming, if of no particular note.—And with how many of those filling the higher ranks of the film industry can as much be said!

However, I cannot whitewash him more than that—for many years this individual had been a deafening Noise, way up in the film firmament. He possessed many of the tricks of his elevated and noisy station.—This was my second visit to Marrakech: it was the

hottest period of the year, so the hotel was almost empty and the restaurant in the palm court had been closed down, the waiters gone north to do a bit of café work. The handful of guests were directed to a restaurant upon a neighboring boulevard. There night after night, upon a *terrasse* consisting of no more than six tables, in a cloud of flies, in a subtropical temperature (123° in the day) I sat almost in the company of this engaging magnifico, I was much more than within mere earshot of his conversation—I was bombarded by his dreamy bombast.

The first words I heard him utter were these, whether you believe me or not:

“I can understand,” he announced dreamily, “killing *a man*—I can understand *that!*—I can’t understand killing *a child!*”

I looked up, I gazed over, and I saw that “bull-throated—bare of arm,” this fourth-form hero was dreamily thrown back in his chair toying with a crumb—pondering. He was this time pondering *a kill*. He *could* not see himself as the Ripper of a defenseless bambino! Someone had evidently canvassed the murder of a child—and his mind had drifted away to two-gallon hats, at the news of this cowardly crime. As he expressed himself upon this delicate distinction in homicide, his staff and two French visitors hung upon his words.

Resigning myself to this study (some are born among the great, and some have the great thrust upon them), I next heard my man laying down the law of Islam. He was quoting the Koran. And he was

laying it down to his rather jumpy young Berber interpreter—who was no doubt a fairish interpreter but perhaps not much of a *tolba* student. When corrected in this way upon some matter of Islamic doctrine by his sheikish boss (who even at times, when feeling particularly fine, taught him a little Arabic, as well as a little Koranic law, and the young Berber's eyes danced up and down with annoyance) he often showed signs of great strain. The Berber voice would rise a little hysterically, to get above the slow deliberate accents of his Irish-American master—battling in his clipped French. But his French was never corrected, only his Arabic.

In this connection the Berber was able to retaliate. I have in mind an awkward moment in the hotel lounge. It was when the film magnate and his retinue had just returned from a day in the high mountains. A little-frequented Atlas lake, ten thousand feet up, had afforded his lieutenant and himself the delights of a headlong he-man dip and as he came in past the clerks' office—a little dreamily as usual—he told the lady in the office what a refreshing dip it had been and she said that it must have been. Then with a ponderous grace, frowning and casual, and stretching himself a little, in answer to her inquiries, he began to tell her about the route they had taken. But forgetting some detail, the name of a village had gone out of his head, he turned towards the Berber interpreter. He asked him in Arabic suddenly (or he thought it was Arabic) what was the name of the village—what was the name of the village—what was the *name* of the

village!—But the Berber interpreter (not expecting at the moment to be addressed in any tongue but French) could not for the life of him make out what he was being asked. (At least so it seemed, though it may have been put on.) So he inquired *in French* what it was that his master wished to know, and his master again insisted *in Arabic*—attempting sternly to mesmerize the slow-witted Berber into understanding. But the latter merely looked very confused and stuttered in French, turned this way and that and showed every sign of nervous strain—for he made his living after all as an interpreter, and if this big drawling transatlantic *enfant gaté* went back to the Residency and said he did not think much of the interpreter they had given him, that wouldn't help his career. It was a very painful scene.

The great man turned away from him with considerable languor (*pondering*—about Berbers, it was clear) as one turns one's back upon an instrument that has been found wanting.—But as an involuntary assistant at this characteristic scene I could not help thinking that if the interpreter did not recognize the single Arab sentence "What is the name of—" it could not have been very correctly uttered.

Then this great producer was an inveterate sketcher. The entire table at the restaurant was reduced to silence and an embarrassed inactivity upon one occasion for upwards of three quarters of an hour while the great man was in travail with the sketch of a filmable "Fatmah" they had encountered in a hill-village—sketching away upon the back of the menu,

he bent bare-armed over his work, in a sullen anguish of cross craftsmanship. When completed, it was handed round, amid exclamations of obsequious approval. Flung back in his chair, he smiled upon his handiwork.

On another occasion after dinner he whistled a great deal. And also he would buzz and jazz through a comb, used as a mouth-organ (the comb had to be sent for). These were, he said, airs he had composed during his early days in New York. This performance was very painful to everybody. The sickliest of grins transfixed the faces of all the assistants. The inveterate publicity habit *ne chôme pas*—it never rests. It was certainly *plus fort que lui*. It would have been impossible for him to understand that his friends, not being fans in the ordinary sense, took no interest whatever in the early history of his personality, nor gave a hoot on a lousy comb for its early struggles upon the sidewalks of New York! Nevertheless I make a point of believing the troublesome *permanent childhood* of this overpublic man was an accident, in the sense that left to himself he would have been a perfectly inoffensive, nice, commonplace chap.

This order of film filibuster comes into these lands to take poisonous nonsense out of them, not to bring his poisons into them, hence (as I have said) he may be regarded as a benefactor. Those he exploits to their detriment are quietly seated far away, in the European film theaters and those of the U.S.A.—it is they who

absorb all the childish *sheikery*, the sweet-toothed and soft-brained city-mobs—their minds parched in the vulgar emptiness of the false-dust.—But there is another order of “film filibuster” who *brings the stuff in*, from outside—reels upon reels of kiss-stuff and crime. In an excellent account of the American film industry called *Star Dust*, we are given a glimpse of that sort of immigrant ruffian. I will quote a passage—especially since it demonstrates how the characteristic *arsenic habit* of the north and west African natives is taken over (if not improved on) by the interlopers, the filibusters.

Mr. Gordon is speaking of the experiences of a friend of his, who was a film filibuster.

A friend, intent on gain, once took a travelling-cinema plant to West Africa. He wanted to set up a cinema near the desert's edge at a town from which the caravans started toward Timbuctoo. He hoped to reap a small fortune by the enterprise, for here was a real example of the mountain coming to Mahomet. The ordinary cinema theater, as the Albanian promoters had found to their loss, must continually change its films or audiences will fade away. This entails no small expense. But at this town a full half of the population changed every month, collecting gradually to join the caravans and emptying as soon as the caravans set out. So, instead of the owner having to bring new films to the audiences,

Nature contrived to bring new audiences to the films.

That he never reached his destination is part of a longer story, but on the road he naturally tried to minimize expenses by showing as he moved. Thus, landing at Lagos he hired a huge courtyard with a balcony, open to the skies of heaven. This was by no means the first movie enterprise to delight the black population of Lagos, for he had two rivals. One was a Portuguese half-breed, who tried to poison the new competitor, but dosed the wrong man; the other was a negro woman, she who insisted on running the life of Christ upside down rather than cut her film.

The lucky film filibuster, you will note—he who remained in possession, the top-dog of his class—was handy with the arsenic. Also he was Portuguese. But most of the masters of the contraband trade in the Sous are Portuguese. And of course all filibusters are either themselves poisoners, or are affiliated, more or less closely, with poisoners. The amiable and romantic author of *High Wind in Jamaica* was as a matter of course introduced to the most eminent poisoner in the Sous when he went there—every British tourist (who isn't a filibuster) is introduced to the local star-poisoner.—But already we are in the atmosphere of the Sous—and so we will at once leave for those regions, I think, having given a glimpse or two of the film racket, which should serve to show one of the

uses to which "the romantic policy" of Lyautey has been put, and one of the main resources of Morocco.

I did not go directly into the Sous myself however. I went up into the *Haute Atlas*—the "Great Atlas," the English say. It is impossible to turn one's back upon Marrakech without looking up, once, at the mountain-wall.—The Atlas Mountains rise to a height of fourteen thousand feet, are without glaciers, extremely hot in the summer, and of the most impressive magnificence. They are like the sierras of central Spain, but higher, hotter and even more denuded. The people who live in them are called Chleuhs—which is the name given to the Berber dialect spoken all over the south of Morocco.

Mountains, like the ocean (height and climate being equal), are much the same everywhere in the world. In Mexico, Abyssinia, Afghanistan or Morocco if you describe one you would have described the other probably. Their inhabitants, and the places they build, differ—not the clouds, rocks, torrents, snows.

To describe, in rhetorical or literary language, an Atlas kasbah, or timgremt, would serve no object in a book of this sort. So at this point I pass over all that mountain-world, and pass immediately beyond the barrier of the Atlas. In so doing, we arrive at length at the ultimate object of this book—namely the extreme western and southern limit of Maghreb, and the queer filibustering confraternity that makes up its pioneer population, and the "Blue" deserts into which it melts.

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BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I.

AGADIR

AGADIR has its name in our European history books. For us *Agadir* is a word that consorts, in a rather cheap and sinister fashion, with *Kaiser*. If the "Exile of Doorn" should read this chapter, he will see a Haupt-Quartier map bristling with beflagged pins—he will remark a black spot, all by itself, with, for nearest neighbor northward, Mogador: and beneath it a little yellow-colored patch (yellow for Spain) marked "Rio de Oro." A gunboat of the name of *Panther* will then steam into his ken, coming from the north, an insignificant unit of his old High Sea Fleet. Its guns (considerably out-of-date) will be trained upon the black spot—the spot by itself, above the no-man's-land called Rio de Oro—where there are no black spots, because there are no habitations to speak of, except the tents of the Mauretanian nomads. *Agadir* will stand for a dream-town in the old *Welt-politik* world, whose horizons were swept with clattering imperial eagles, a vanished breed. At Agadir for Doorn's bearded ex-war-lord—an ominous hush will come over Europe once more—a hush of *his*

making! For all the millions who violently died in the ghastly epic of which he was the central figure, might they not all have died a few years sooner, had Agadir, not Sarajevo, been the starting-point? The name Agadir would then have been even more famous.

For me, who stayed for some time upon that black spot, which is all the map gives of it, Agadir has a quite different significance. At Agadir I see a crowd of images that compete with the imperial pre-war fustian, of course. As nearest to me, I perceive (above the bright teeth of the waves under the trade wind) a souk of tents and booths, and beside it, between the edge of the low cliff and the high road, a concourse of asses and camels: there is a wild and gesticulating Maraboutic figure (a segment of the magic circle he has drawn in the dust of the high road) pretending to charm a cobra, while his assistants beat tambourines and blow into oboes. The cobra's dark flat-fish of a head and neck are erected, they rock with a gentle motion, indeed not at all unlike a solid black plaice on-end, moved hither and thither by an ocean current.

A Berber crowd surrounds the frantic quack. Meanwhile a European doctor hurries from spectator to spectator. Seizing them deftly by the left arm with a well-satisfied "caught-you-my-lad" look in his hunter's eye, he lifts up the sleeve, and with a knife scrapes the skin over the biceps. Following upon his heels is a Berber acolyte holding up a saucer. From this the doctor takes the serum—the operation lasts at most a few seconds. The whole crowd is vaccinated inside ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

With one doctor they told me of, this fascinating game got the whip-hand. He was known to the Berber for twenty miles round. Driving his car along a road through the bled (even were he at the time on his way to perform a major operation) if he caught sight of a Berber in a field, he would bring the car to an abrupt halt, leap out, and rush across at his prey, needle in hand. But the Berber would take to his heels as soon as he saw the doctor stop. So this fanatical physician would chase the flying Berber uphill and down dale till he caught him: both blowing like porpoises, clutching the Berber tightly by the bicep, he would vaccinate him.—At the word “Agadir” I see (metaphorically) the wild-eyed Maraboutic figure, gesticulating above the serpent, and the no-less-wild-eyed physician, rushing down the field after the barefooted Berber. Both come to life, the doctor at second-hand—for obliquely I am aware of the placid military grocer telling me about the doctor, fifty kilometers beyond Agadir, in the *dir* of the Anti-Atlas, in the country where it occurred (the local Berbers still with the doctor’s mark upon their brown biceps doubtless — *better-than-to-have-a-face-pitted-with-Smallpox!* you can fancy the doctor’s retort) while bled-tramping peasants lift their right hands in that “Hail and Farewell!” gesture, as myself and the official pass them in our Citroën—“dissident” mountains upon our right, the steppes between Agadir and Tiznit upon our left.

“Lyautey built Casablanca. I will build Agadir!” that is reputed to be the destiny reserved for this spot

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by Mr. Lucien Saint, the present Resident.—But there are difficulties. I will attempt to explain these difficulties.

In the year 1551 Captain Wyndham sailed into the beautiful bay of Agadir, in “a tall ship called *The Lion*, of London.” Captain Wyndham was the first European trader to get his foot upon these shores, although my informant says that a certain Aldaie “professeth himself to have been the first inventor of this trade.” But how shall we name the “trade” Captain Wyndham (or was it Aldaie?—I prefer to think it was Wyndham) “invented”? I fear his trade was that of a *filibuster*. My informant calls him “*filibustier plutot que marin véritable*,” and says that before that Wyndham had been a pirate.

The following year, in 1552, Captain Wyndham came with three tall ships instead of one. That is *The second voyage to Barbary*, that may be found in Hakluyt. And with him he had the right worshipful Sir John Yorke, Sir William Gerard, Sir Thomas Wroth, and Master Francis Lambert, a lot of brother pirates, I suppose, and fellow filibusters.

A certain Mr. Scott O'Connor gives it as his opinion, in a travel book, that “This coast has always attracted filibusters and adventurers.” But its filibusters have formerly come in “tall ships, called the *Lion*” and done the thing in style. Today there is absolutely no question that there are more filibusters to the square inch at Agadir than in any other part of the globe. A census would immediately demonstrate that. But the ships they come in are not “tall”—they are

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usually dirty little schooners packed with contraband carbines and pistols; they are bound for Ifni, flying for preference the Portuguese flag for some reason—those are the birds of passage, with others passing through by land in tempestuous Tin Lizzies, or big green bulbous Peugeots: but many are domiciled at Agadir. They are perhaps “stout fellows” (I can recall one with a large red egg of a head and a first-class colonial belly—*stout* maybe, but not in the picturesque Tudor sense)—stout filibusters all for sure, but shorn alas of all romance (just as the one above-mentioned is shorn of hair). When one is first confronted with the squalor of our actual filibusters (and one is at once up against the filibusters the moment one sets foot in Agadir) one looks round to find some other term for this “trade,” invented by Captain Wyndham of “the tall ship, the Lion,” as it is practiced in the Petrol Age.

A middle-class British filibuster with the manners of a polite grocer, engaged who can doubt in most revolutionary plots, but going about them as if he were an indignant burgess on a watch-committee out to catch the dirty dog who scribbled offensive remarks on the walls of the local chapel—perpetually flushed in a sort of righteous watchfulness—that is what we find, alas, *en fait de filibustier*. But that is like a bad joke—a damp squib that *will* not filibust—for all the explosive glamour of Africa, in spite too of that splendid Wyndham of Hakluyt who spoke a Tudor tongue, with the same *label* certainly as that still current in Tooting or Mill Hill, but ah, who did not

hide his piratic light under a bushel of legal technicalities, nor present the appearance, I am sure, of a smug City Worthy, paunchy and self-righteous.

The position in Agadir is this. The "Situation is Such"! Agadir is situated in a perfect bay. It would make a first-class port. Its climate is a blessed perfection of moderation, never too hot, never too cold. Its sea-road is another Corniche. It will make a Nice or Cannes—except that its mountains are rather too African—sandy, tufa-ish, crusty, cactus-spotted, with palmetto-rashes, not high enough (that is, just here) and would not pass muster without a fall of snow. All the same, one says *Corniche*. Corniche has often been said. But the port is the thing. Here will end, when they get it through, the railway by way of Bou d'Nib, which, by the Sahara route, will join Tunis and the Sous, and so link up (with luck—for Spain soon might cede Rio de Oro) the French Empire in Africa. There is no other possible port anywhere this side of the desert. From it you are in St. Louis de Senegal by the Aero-post in a few hours—how many? a dozen perhaps. *So it must be Agadir*. Agadir must become as great as Casa. Its destiny is implicit in the map.

If the French develop the Sous—Agadir is at the mouth more or less of the Oued Sous—if they scrape some copper, zinc, coal or iron out of the Anti-Atlas (those best placed to know are not so sanguine as others regarding these mineral riches), that will help the port. But it must be a big port anyway if the French stop in Morocco.

Marshal Lyautey, however, had a portentous say-

ing. This they repeat in Agadir. And Marshal Lyautey was a very great guy who knew Morocco like his pocket. What he said was from the horse's mouth: and he always said, with an ominous emphasis:

"We must never open Agadir!"

The French respected the advice of this great administrator, until two or three years ago. No one could go to Agadir, without a military permit, up till then. Needless to say all the people who had no business there got there all right. Years before the place was "opened" every person against whom the *Not-open* order was directed was comfortably installed, and making as much of a nuisance of himself as he could, without risking his precious skin (and the French are a humane people, and a man has to do a great deal before he begins to run the shadow of a personal risk in a French Protectorate).

Then, Lyautey out of the way, his policies under a cloud, the Paris politicians in full power (where formerly it had only been the admirable soldier) — bang! the door was thrown wide open. *Agadir was open!* Santa Cruz de Cap d'Ager was open to the outer world. In Agadir *everyone* held *his* breath! Every European and every "native" in Agadir was spell-bound with expectancy. When would the wave they felt suspended over their heads break? When would the first batch of the great horde of pioneers come storming in? The "Old Moroccans" from their usual seats upon the terrace of Barrutel's, the principal café of the town, shaded their eyes, gazing down

towards Founti and beyond, for the first immigrant bus-loads.

But nothing happened. No more strangers than usual rolled up, day by day, and month by month, in the Mogador buses—respectably seated (inside only) about thirty, no more, of which two-thirds are Berbers or Jews, who go back or go on, their business done.

This almost anybody might have foreseen. Anyone who *wanted* to get into Agadir had got in long ago; it was full to saturation point of equivocal “pioneers,” who lived on air and seemed to have nothing better to do than go to Barrutel’s and have a paloma or two, or a double Scotch, and cheat some other pith-helmeted pascha or smooth-tongued little gold-digger, as *oiseux* and seigneurial as themselves. All the licensed filibusters, and sedentary “pioneers,” who had any interest in Agadir, had been there living snugly under the wing of the military for years, plotting their squalid plots—about little strips of land for which false claims in faked Hassani deeds had been forged and reforged (by lettered Arabs in Taroudant or in Tiznit), sealed and delivered, lost and found again, about cargoes of rifles in Portuguese bottoms—they were already “old Moroccans” as it is called, “des Vieux Marocains.” Squatting and plotting in the midst of the pleasant bustle on the café terrace, airing their kitchen-Chleuh upon a pack of armleted shoeblacks—old habitués, watched by the police and each other, as large as life.

Everyone was surprised all the same, except this filibuster ring perhaps (half the White population).

—Although Agadir was *opened*, the embargo off, all that occurred inside the town itself was that the civil authorities took over from the military authorities, did not do the job so well, and the town got disgustingly dirty. Everyone cursed the day when the military had ceased to administer it. Meanwhile no more houses were built—a few were pulled down perhaps. That is all that happened. The White Town was still hastily-stuck-together shacks, and large shelters upon the edge of the sea—temporary premises of the bus-offices, Barrutel's, and in short all that ragged one-sided, one-storied street that makes Agadir still resemble a Wild West mining camp.

CHAPTER II.

THE FILIBUSTER OF TOOTING BECK

WHAT was the cause, you may well ask, of all this stagnation upon the one hand, and this filibusterish activity upon the other? Just apparently what Lyautey had foreseen—the motive for his formula: “We must never open Agadir!”—namely an embarrassing impasse, which could no longer be accounted for on the score of aggravated “dissidence,” and prolonged insecurity. That was the cause for this paralysis. It appears that the French were not upon quite such sure ground here as elsewhere. The Berber resistance, that was a bagatelle. It was the undergrowth of treaties, “capitulations,” leases, and counterleases that made Agadir a kind of jungle, in which only the slowest and most painful progress could be made. It was only too true: nothing whatever was to be gained by “opening Agadir”—though for that matter not very much to be lost: except that, from the French standpoint, they would to some extent be forced into political action, to precipitate changes which on the whole it would have been better to allow time to effect.

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

The Germans (Manessmann Brothers and a lot more) had acquired extensive, exclusive rights in South Morocco. Agadir, they had hoped, would become a German port. The Sous would be theirs. Many of these rights were bought up by British subjects, when the Germans left. But "British subject" in Morocco means anybody. The most powerful of the local Caïds was a "British subject" the French found, as well as a star-poisoner (even for Morocco, a past-master with arsenic), an old ruffian in fact of the first order. Being "British"—being established right upon the limits of the Protectorate, upon the edge of irrecconcilable "dissidence"—it may be imagined how awkward the French found it to deal with this old dog, this swarthy British Bulldog—as indeed with all the other Britons—the Bulldogs of Mogador, the Mastiffs of Safi, the Bullpups of Casa, Tangier, and Fez—not to mention those jolly old John Bulls of Gibraltar and of Malta, of Berlin and Timbuctoo! And then behind these genuine passport Britons came all the "British-protected persons." It was indeed a nasty, ticklish mess for the poor old Frogs!

But why should a victorious French Army, rounding off its unchallenged protectorate over the Cherifian Empire, hesitate to send an apocryphal Bulldog of Old England about his bloody business? Alas (from the French point of view, which in this case is certainly my own—and the longer I remained in Agadir the more pronouncedly pro-French I became—I felt like sporting a little Tricolor, so ashamed was I of the poor appearance of the local British filibusters)—England and the United States still possess what are

called "capitulations" in Morocco. That means that those countries have never given up their technical rights to behave just as they choose there: there is a *British post office* in every Moroccan city, as an emblem of British independence of French Control.

In Morocco an Englishman (or an American) cannot be arrested by the French police. No one is allowed to touch him. An Englishman is far safer in Morocco than he is in England. Unless he murders somebody he is above the law, and even then it is questionable if they could get him inside a French police station.

A year ago a violent dispute occurred just south of Casa between a Frenchman and an Englishman. It was about the usual thing in South Morocco: the question as to which of two or more worthies a certain piece of land belonged. Both claimed it. But the Frenchman at the moment of the argument was actually on it. There the matter rested, till one day he went to Mazagan for the afternoon. The Englishman at the head of a band of pals—armed with rifles, tin hats and the rest, got into the house. When the Frenchman returned, there they all were spluttering in bandy-legged Bulldog fashion, "J'y suis, j'y reste!" It took half the police force of Casa to evict them—in this case bloodlessly.

You can see from this how very inconvenient these capitulations can be for the French; and the farther south you get, the more the capitulations are to the fore. The more warily the French have to tread. The international booby-traps of an absurd, out-of-

date, imperialist diplomacy lie thick and menacing on every hand.

It is not of course the British consular authorities who are responsible for this state of affairs. They are not only most amiable people—as willing to help stray Bulldogs as are the French—but actually they have a great deal of trouble with other sorts of Bulldogs, who take advantage of capitulations to defy the French police—engaging in every lawless activity under their noses on the ground that they are Britons.

But the land question is beyond all others most intricate and troublesome. That fine old British Bulldog, the Caïd of Imsgan, whom I have already mentioned, thought nothing of selling a piece of land in Agadir—which did not belong to him anyway—to half a dozen people at the same time. Sometimes he would sell the same piece of land twenty times over. To whom does this piece of much-sold land today belong? It is almost impossible to say! The French rack their brains to discover some issue, perspiring in this tangled undergrowth of claim and counter-claim.

What immobilized the march of progress upon the sea-front was, however, mainly a wholesale claim upon whole blocks of land, on behalf of a whole kennel of Bulldogs of one sort and another—all of whose interests are in the hands of a queer middle-aged middle-class Bulldog Drummond of an ex-Temporary Major. This odd, smug, highly respectable-looking filibuster lives outside Agadir in a smug white “Arab” house he has built for himself. What is this gentleman exactly?

It is hard to say. He is a house-agent of a peculiarly Moroccan order. No doubt he was selected for the job on account of his typically British appearance: *he* is the real thing all right—the good, solid, pink, fetch-and-carry order of faithful dog-Toby of a man—his honest baldness inflamed with exposure to the African sun, with an invaluable air too of righting wrongs, about him, and assisting the poor downtrodden Arab against the wicked French, and really I dare say charged with a good bit of beefy romanticism of the station-bookstall shilling-a-volume order (the Briton in foreign parts, what what!—a bit of “secret service,” a dash of free-lance, but always sure to be anywhere where there’s a “scrap,” what what!) though doubtless aware which side his bread is buttered.—This strange plump Cockney-Scot was organizer and commander-in-chief of an assortment of pith-helmeted, Mill-Hill-Schoolish Tooting-Beck-bred hangers-on—he ran the principal estate-office of Agadir, had a “dinky” dairy farm and his milk-cart affected to take milk to the town, but the town complained it was none too easy to get milk out of the Temporary Major. But the milk may after all have been a blind. Also he owned rustic auto-buses, which took natives out to their villages in the bled (but this may have been to have the fellaheen under his thumb—a bus-driver is a very influential person in Morocco). Me he regarded immediately with hostility and suspicion to my very great surprise. If it rested with him he would keep Agadir closed against all visiting Bulldogs, I came to

the conclusion, over the Cook's Tour standard of intelligence.

To the natives, hotel proprietors and so on, he represented himself as the unofficial British consul (Agadir has no official English representative at all—though I venture to think it is about time it had and that he is badly needed): and the hotels send you to this local Briton-in-chief for information. When I said I wished to visit some *magasins-collectifs*, especially of the Ikounka tribe, this excellent man was puzzled. Doubtless he had always been far too busy bull-dogging about, and defying the French, to find out anything about the ancient social organization of the people of the Sous, or any such boring subjects as that, that was quite understood, though he regarded himself as a great authority. He seemed able to talk kitchen-Arabic, and probably to patter a little in Chleuh and claimed to know more than anyone—except perhaps his “Serbian” adjutant—regarding the Sous. He had never heard, at all events, of a *Collective Agadir* (the communal fortress in which people of an allied group of villages store their grain and valuables). Also he had never heard of the Ikounka. His face was as blank at Ikounka as at magasin-collectif. He fetched his adjutant. His adjutant had never heard of a magasin-collectif. He had never heard of the Ikounka. His adjutant retired after a little argument, in which he had questioned the existence of such a tribe at all, to consult with some especially *louche*-looking Arabs. After a time he returned, sat down and said “Ça y est!” The “Serbian” adjutant now

knew who the Ikounka were. Also he knew what a magasin-collectif was. I was quite right. There were such things. But there was one very grave obstacle regarding the Ikounka. It was this: *it was quite out of the question* that the *Bureau des Affaires Indigènes* would allow me to go so far outside the limits, or rather within the limits, of the *Zone d'Insécurité*, as the territory of the Ikounka. Did I not know what was the Zone d'Insécurité? well, the Zone of Insecurity began at ten kilometers outside the town. The more I talked to these two birds, the farther off, the more inaccessible the territory of the Ikounka came to appear. The more unrealizable it seemed, my purpose of visiting a magasin-collectif. The red-pated Bulldog middle-class filibuster, he set his jaws and narrowed his eyes, and exclaimed that if *he* wanted to go to the Ikounka, he would go to the Ikounka! The French wouldn't stop him!

"In this country you have to have, well—to use a coarse expression—you have to have *guts*, you understand, yes, if you have the *guts*—!" I cast my eyes down, and stopped them upon his waist-line, and saw that he had *guts*; but he looked very fierce and chewed his pipe in true Bulldog fashion, and I wondered what order of *risks* these were, that this prosperous unofficial British beadle and perfect picture of a special constable, who had taken the wrong turning, might conceivably run: instinctively I knew that it must be one of those bogus-risks and cheaply earned thrills, so dear to the romantic soul of that particular fresh-colored offshoot of some well-policed Tooting

Beck; and looking up modestly, depreciating the indecorous word, I said:

"But I am not brave. I do not wish to defy any of these charming and good-natured Frenchmen here. I like the French—it is peculiar!"

He scowled. But he said nothing. (*Like the Frogs!* By the Roast Beef of Old England, what traitor is this!) It was difficult to know what to do! He would have liked to take me—*without permission* (I flinched and whitened—I threw up my hands) but his car was so big, it would be spotted at once! They would say—What is that bloody Englishman up to now? Besides the car was being repaired. And his "Serbian" adjutant said he was the only man in Agadir who knew the road—he knew it backwards—he had been on it at all hours of the day and night—also of course he could speak like a native the patois of all those parts—(how absurd of him not to have known when I said Ikounka—why, he had been there only last week) it was a pity he could not take me, but his pal's car was engaged—he *knew*, yes, he was positive—for the next few days.—But we should have had to have gone *without permission*. *That* I would never get! He could tell me—*that* they would never give me!

I visited the Bureau des Affaires Indigènes next day. The colonel-in-command of all this part of the Sous saw me himself, without any difficulty. I found him a most charming French officer, thoroughly acquainted with the social organization of these small Berber republics; he was a personal friend of Montagne. The latter is the author of the standard works

upon these subjects. (My equivocal compatriot had sneered at Montagne—the trouble about Montagne, said he, was that he thought he spoke Chleuh, but no Chleuh could understand him.) The colonel made no difficulty at all about giving me permission to visit the Ikounka. He wrote a personal note to the Commandant of the Military Post at Ait Baha, within whose jurisdiction were the Ikounka villages. Let me place on record that I have found (with one exception) the French military authorities the pattern of politeness, ready in every respect to place at a foreigner's disposal every facility for studying the places and peoples they administer.

On the other hand, the strange figure giving himself out as "Representing British Interests" in the Sous put every obstacle in my way. Lyautey himself could not have wished to occult Agadir more than did he. From the start he breathed discouragement, and exuded obstructiveness with every drop of Bulldog sweat that the warmth of the climate and the strenuousness of his peculiar house-agenting brought to the surface of his pink and polished cuticle.—Why? What was there, I asked myself, that I must not see? And I began of course looking round with idle curiosity. A puzzling situation! For some reason this strange semi-political house-agent—who threatened, if the French authorities laid so much as a finger upon *his* land, or the land over which he mounted his Bulldog British guard, that he would put machine-guns on it—did not desire my presence in this rather ticklish part of the world. I had told the man who I was.

When I said who I was he blushed. The fellow was familiar with my books. He asked me twice if I was really myself, and I said I was certainly that identical filibuster of letters, and we had a good laugh as one filibuster to another: but he kept looking at me and blushing all over the crown of his pink billiard-ball of an occiput. He was both better and worse after this. He said he was a writer too—before the war he had been a reporter in Pittsburgh, I think it was, and also Johannesburg. A rolling stone, I said to myself—he has gathered no moss! But I suppose he must have read something in my books or in one of them that made him think that I was—what I imagine he would call “always looking for trouble.” Or he may have thought I had the Evil Eye. It would cast a spell over his cows—it may have been that: they gave strangely little milk as it was. The magic of my presence might have finished it.

I describe all these incidents because they show you the temper of this little frontier township. It is at once a fierce and a bourgeois little hole. The suspicious sniffing at one's heels of rather questionable Bulldogs was natural enough—they have the sullen fixed idea of *trespass*, and scent in the most detached of indifferent analysis a “Nosy Parker” that is understood—I did not even attempt to send their consciences to sleep. But the French, especially the military, were everywhere frank, well-behaved and sensible.

At last it has been decided, however, rather suddenly, to build this city that has hung fire so long. It

is to be some kilometers out of the town, to the south. All the boulevards and so forth are mapped out, land is changing hands with lightning rapidity, gangs with chains and tapes are busy in the bled. In a year it should be there—not quite where they had intended it, not quite where it should be, but still built—at least that. Certainly when I left in late July, there was an increasing bustle. There will be enormous waste spaces, between the different bits of the city, no doubt (which will necessarily be fragmentary)—blank spaces over which shady and vociferous house-agents of Casa, Bulldogs of Mogador, deposed sheiks and others are wrangling with the French commissaries and will wrangle till the Crack of Doom. But a city of some sort will no doubt rise up, and can scarcely fail to flourish. It is a very interesting spectacle indeed to be in at the building of an important mushroom-city—which will represent, when it is up, enormous capitals, and observe closely if not sympathetically all the spiders (who will be for ever underneath it) spinning their preliminary webs.

Meanwhile the French officials and civilians seem a little dubious about it all. They are uneasy at the quagmire of intrigue, bluff, brigandage, threats, obstructions that they feel incessantly beneath their feet, and who can wonder? Ever since the days of the *Panther* this has been volcanic soil. The “capitulations,” since they are of no use to the People of England, should of course be given up. But that I suppose would be like hoping for a repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

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Agadir is cut off from the world by mountain, ocean and desert. A hundred kilometers south of Agadir is the desert city of Tiznit. In appearance Tiznit is much like Marrakech, though of course a tenth the size: the same massive gates, gardens of date-palms, and outside a more complete tufa-strewn sandy wilderness than the Plain of Morocco. The Anti-Atlas are upon its eastern flank. They are very wild and barren mountains indeed. Tiznit is the extreme southern limit of the French power in Morocco. At its gates almost begins the great desert of the Rio de Oro. There are a thousand miles of desert between it and the Soudan.

To the north Agadir is blocked with mountains, the road to Mogador, the nearest town, being much of it a coast-road. Inland, the Valley of the Sous is enclosed by giant mountains. Agadir is therefore particularly isolated from the civilized world. It is natural that the German Imperialist should have selected the Sous, and its natural port, Agadir, for his activities. And of course in the future it might again be found that the isolation from the rest of Morocco of the Sous Valley would tempt the enemies of French rule to use this backwater, with the enormous deserts to the south, in the same manner as they did the Riff. For the Politician, one feels, this must be a highly interesting spot. For the Artist, it is even more so.

CHAPTER III.

THE BROTHEL OF AGADIR

(Virgins 25 Francs Apiece)

TO DEMONSTRATE, in the physical field, how the battle of land-rights must result in trisecting, throwing off its axis, mutilating and scattering to the four winds the future city of Agadir, I had intended to describe how the hills, ravines and flats lay, of which the potential city is composed. But when an attempt is made to tell one how the rooms and passages of a house occur (in the murder story this is often done) most readers, it is quite certain, cannot follow, most only skip. Language is not suited for that abstract map-making. What is the use of saying—There's a big hill upon the left, then there's a lower one, to the right, flatter on the top, and so forth? None whatever.—Agadir is a hilly spot. There are big sands, covered with seagulls at low water, where they are wet—enameled and glittering. Like a white cock's comb, with heavily milled edges, there is a kasbah upon a mountain—"Veritable nid d'aigle" the French writers always call it. There are a lot of uncouth and often filthy ravines: the "front" is overgrown with cactus and the spiked candelabrum of the Euphor-

bium, and what I suspected to be juniper, and all sorts of thorny bushes—it is a wilderness of sandy gashes, steep mule and camel tracks leading to the sea; garages and impromptu one-story hotels present their untidy back-yards to the shore. But there are many wide level gaps too in the road-line and big sandy playgrounds for tethering animals or ones squatting for want of something better to do—these are accounted for by the stout Bulldog claims of our passionate compatriot, on behalf of other Bulldogs in the background—bigger and wickedder Bulldogs than he.

At the foot of the mountain, in a wild disordered gully, is the brothel, the *bousbir*, the quartier réservé (the whore-shop, the lupanar, the mud-nests of official love). Sitting on a stone, upon the opposite hill, looking down into the brothel, I could see all its alfresco mud cubbyholes. A weather-rotted curtain was fixed over the openings to the miserable dens of the females of this sad menagerie. "Deep-throated" German chanting came from a mud-cell stuck onto the nearer wall. So I could not see this choir of the Legion. The queen of the colony—a girl of about fifteen—was holding a reception at the opposite end.

One brothel which I met with inland was more peculiar even than this: it was like a large mud-built pigsty; or like the empty many-celled souks you come upon in the bled, only made of adobe instead of stone. It was quite open, or seemed so. Each cell contained a woman—I saw it about noon, I walked down this repulsive tropical lane, full of fierce house-

flies: a stout snore came from each sty. This was in the mountains. The stable for loose women in Agadir was scarcely fit for mules, but it was better than the Tenderloin of the bled.

To the bousbir, the love-souk of Agadir, I went one night, in the company of three Italians—it was the day after that I drew it. There was a tent at the gate, with an armed policeman in it. He let us in, and we found ourselves in a large empty court of mud. This was unlighted, but there were lamps behind the curtains of the women's cells, occupying three sides of it. There must have been thirty women in it. Each cell was about seven feet every way, except from roof to floor, which was under six feet. Against the inner wall was the bed. We all crept in at the hole or door on all fours. We sat on the floor of beaten mud, with our backs against the mud-wall.

We were visiting the queen of the brothel. She was a bright, Berber girl, with good features, with eyes like a squirrel's, good teeth and a little chin. Her face was painted and tattooed. (There was a row of vertical spots where in a man the chin-cleft would be.) As she was so young probably her eyelids had less kohl than those of her older mates, whose eyes oozed ink; they kept crawling in and out (she usually drove them away with a harsh, indignant shout). Two Foreign Legion non-coms crept in and sat down. They were German. Although drunk they were very quiet. The Roman Legionaries at Volubilis must have had much the same square countenances.

Our hostess was extremely grave and the small cell

was oppressive with her matter-of-factness: with an attentive frown she made the green tea and mint, and handed everybody present a small glass—not small enough, for it is extremely sickly.

The senior of the three Italians, an ex-Foreign Legion sergeant (or commissariat non-com) was talkative, he wanted the girl to undress at once. She ignored this pointless suggestion. We all drank our tea and talked of one thing and another—no one except the Italian who had brought us paid much attention to the girl. When several cups of tea had been drunk, the chief Italian again commanded her to undress “tutti nue.” She frowned and then gave a few Berber giggles. “Oui met-toi tutti nue. Dohol!” At length she went to the two beds (like ships’ bunks against the wall) and took off her clothes and stood looking at us like a squirrel—showing after much coaxing its winter *cachette* of nuts. Everybody looked: when I remarked upon the stoutness of the belly, at fifteen, an Air-force non-com who had crawled in said:

“Evidément! *C’est le ventre colonial!*”

“Elles ont toutes des bédans? Quel dommage!” I said.

“Evidément!” he said. “Que voulez-vous! C’est bien le ventre colonial!”

She soon covered up her “colonial stomach” again, and when all harnessed up in leaden and silver bric-à-brac, sat down. She poured out more green tea with much mint.

"Eh bien, je m'en vais me coucher!" said the Air-force corporal. He crawled out.

"Moi aussi!" exclaimed one of the Foreign Legion visitors.

They crawled out—one rolled out, the other crouched and charged out through the hole head first.

We all crawled out into the pitch-black yard. There were a few white figures moving down the sides of the cells. Several Foreign Legion privates moved listlessly up and down, smoking. The other women we had seen were savage blowzy bundles of gray rags—battered old flowers of the bled, a fat Jewess, with beady eyes in a mask of pallid dough.

"She is the best!" one of the Italians said, meaning the one we had been with. "She is the only one here."

The senior Italian remained inside; the curtain fell violently over the hole by which we had issued on all fours. We went out of the gate, *bon-soired* off the premises by the police-guard in the tent outside.

This brothel is not unknown; a book by J. Kessel (in its fiftieth thousand) has an account of it: he writes that in going to have a look at it he knew "that there could be nothing comparable to Casablanca," but that he was not prepared for this, that he "was stupefied by its miserable aspect. . . . At the bottom end of a squalid, dirty, and stinking lane, a wall of *pisé* enclosing a court more cramped than a farm-yard, hid the sensual joys of Agadir. Even at Der-es-Zor, on the Euphrates, even at Palmira, in the Syrian desert, I had found more room to move about at

least, more gaiety, than in this place set aside for prostitution."

It is the large, muddy farmyard without even a street lamp in the middle—the high walls and the rows of squalid niches the size of a small lavatory, built into the wall itself, that calls forth these exclamations of disgust especially from the Parisian traveler. Even if a rough pavement existed (it would cost nothing—the women could beat into the mud the flat stones required—most of these women have worked on the new highways with a hammer, stone-breaking—it is not as though they had no practice) — if there were a hut or two in which you could stand up, or even if, covered with bugs and reeking of stale rose-water, one of the women were a credit to her downtrodden people—with a couple of bold black eyes, or an uncolonial stomach! It is such things that make people write about the bousbir of Agadir, especially if Parisians.

I write about it mainly because its brothel does demonstrate the extent to which Agadir is still the wild frontier township.—"*Here* we are in the bled! In the bled!" as someone shouted at me when he asked me if I liked his *langoustes* and I did not answer quickly enough to please him—though I knew the Breton fishing-boats came all this way—and as far as St. Louis de Senegal—for such *langoustes*: and of course therefore the bled in that respect was the bled and not the bled—since we were where the luxury fish of the cities come from.

It is the bled. (You cannot translate *Bled* cham-

paign or countryside, nor yet quite wilderness. It is what is not *city* in Maghreb—it is the steppe with its cactus, and its mud-concrete fortresses, its donkeys and well-wheels, argans, walnuts and palms—but nine-tenths wilderness, sand or tufa steppe.)

Many talks with the men who look after the “reserved quarters” tended to crystallize my notion of prices. A virgin costs round about fifty or sixty francs three years out of the four. The fourth is invariably a bad year, then she is cheaper. She goes for as low as twenty-five francs. (These are all girls of about thirteen or fourteen—there are no virgins much after that, of course.) There are years when—oh, anything will do it: a franc, a Hassani peseta. The father gets the money. (This is in the *douar*—in the bled.) There is a great deal of extreme misery, which I am sure is no fault of the French, though they naturally are blamed—even the bled is not worse than the Middle West (U.S.A.) in that respect (*cf.* reports *re* the starvation in the Cotton-Belt). Numbers of Mauresques work on the road, breaking stones. After some months of breaking stones on the road it can be readily understood that a woman does not stand on her dignity or sniff at a two-franc piece, even if she would before, which in Morocco is scarcely likely.

Under such conditions it is not surprising that the quartiers réservés are besieged with women of all sorts (mostly no oil-paintings, you can be sure) imploring admittance.

The Foreign Legion are the chief patrons of the bousbir of course. But wherever they are quartered

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there are women who are only too willing for a few francs to do anything: a legionnaire takes a bottle of wine and a blanket and retires into the privacy of the bled; others follow suit, and so it is that, in spite of every regular prostitute *passant la visite* daily, there is much venereal disease.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL LYAUTEY AS THE CREATOR OF "THE GREAT LORDS OF THE ATLAS"

BEFORE turning to the Rio de Oro, that enormous and unknown district immediately to the south of Agadir, I must state an opinion, then attempt to outline the French position up-to-date in this part of the world. After that we shall return to the subject of the filibuster. Then the romance, as also politically the menace, of these deserts will be easier to understand.

First I will divulge my bias. In so far as I can be said to have an opinion regarding French politics, it would approximate to the *Action Française* outlook, rather than to that of, say, Mr. Briand.

I find once more in Budgett Meakin (the classical English authority on Morocco) an attitude that I should endorse. In *Life in Morocco* (1905) he wrote as follows:

All England cares about is the mouth of the Mediterranean, and if this were secured to her . . . she could have no cause to object to the

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French extension. . . . It were better far to come to an agreement with France, and acknowledge what will prove itself one day—that *France is the normal heir to Morocco* whenever the present Empire breaks up.

This statement, he tells us, was published in 1901, and was naturally not at all popular.

Unpopular as this opinion was among the British and other foreign subjects in the country . . . so that at first it had no other advocate, it has since been adopted in Downing Street, and what is of more moment acted upon.

In 1905 that was the position, and today it is doubly so: England, with a scattered Empire everywhere shaken with revolt, is not the England of 1905. And as regards Morocco, English trading interests have almost entirely faded out: the continued presence of the English banks there is only justified by the requirements of "British-protected" persons (of which there are a good number) and the native "Bulldog" of course; but otherwise the English have no more interest in Morocco than they have in the moon. Even the most mischievous soldier-of-fortune with a British passport could scarcely trip or entrap England into a dispute in those parts.

Under these circumstances it may seem otiose to say that the French Protectorate, as far as I can see, is the best of all possible protectorates for Morocco.

It is nevertheless advisable to proclaim it, since there are great numbers of people in Morocco—Italian, Spanish, and a few English—who spend their time abusing the work of French penetration and pacification, and squandering much passionate and stupid eloquence in vilifying France.

There are, however, *two*, or three, Frances—as there are two or three everything else. It is the France of Lyautey that I for my part admire. And the France of Lyautey has nothing to get out of Morocco, of course. "What France will gain by the change," Meakin wrote in 1905, "beyond openings for Frenchmen and the glory of an extended colonial empire, it is hard to imagine." Hard indeed. "So far [in 1905] the only outward evidences of the new position are the over-running of the ports, especially of Tangier, by Frenchmen of an undesirable class." These Frenchmen belong to the Other France, not that of Lyautey—not even of France (geographically) at all. And today, as I have said, the most notable thing about French Morocco is the scarcity of actual Frenchmen of any sort to be found there.

But this scarcity of the French, even in Algiers, was noted by Meakin thirty years ago. He wrote in this connection: "The European colonists [in Algeria] are of all nationalities, *and the proportion which is not French is astonishingly large*"; or again, "Among the foreign colonists it is a noteworthy fact that the most successful are not French." Of course they are not. Who ever heard of the majority of a nation get-

ting anything out of their country holding another country as a colony?

But no "native" population gets anything out of being a colony either: and the native populations of North Africa are no exception to the rule. Hear Meakin upon the native of Tunis under the French rule. "In business or agriculture there is sure to come a time when cash is needed so that French and Jewish moneylenders flourish, and when the Tunisian cannot pay, the merciless hand of foreign law irresistibly sells him up. In the courts the complicated procedure, the intricate code, and the swarm of lawyers, bewilder him, and he sighs for the time when a bribe would have settled the question, and one did at least know beforehand which would win—the one with the longer purse. Now, who knows?"

This solemn pretense of "justice"—the egalitarian *guet-apens* of the European—must of all things be the most irritating to the intelligent indigène. Whether he is really worse off, who can say? But that he is no better off, but as badly off in another and more complicated and unreal way, seems quite possible; and his irritation has to be reckoned with, especially as people are always stirring him up to revolt.

Lyautey (and his master in that art, Galliéni) had, as it seems to me, the secret, better than any English administrator, of "colonization." Essentially his idea was that of a perfectly organized *police*. It was the Norman recipe. (This naturally meant a police that was to be handsomely paid—what is better worth

paying?) And when I have heard extremely prosperous Italians in Morocco spitting against the French, I have reflected how little thanks any police force gets, however intelligent, forbearing and perfectly trained.

But the police are not the only people who have to be paid, that is the trouble. And when the patrons of the police have all been rewarded (for allowing such a lovely police force to exist) there is sometimes not much left; though I am sure that a French protectorate is so efficient that *even then* any change would be for the worse.

But if there are two or three Frances, so there are at least two distinct schools of thought in France regarding the conduct of affairs in Morocco. The method of Lyautey—it was called “la méthode Galliéni”—is one. The essence of the colonial doctrine of Lyautey is to be found in the following passages. The first is a general statement made to a friend in Morocco, at the time of the Riff War.

“If we have in thirteen years,” he said, “of which five were passed in fighting, succeeded in occupying and pacifying this vast country—so warlike, so xenophobe, so jealously closed up till now against attempts at European penetration—it is *entirely* on account of the fact that we have in every circumstance acted as mandataries of the Sultan—of him in whose name the prayers are said in the mosques. That is the reason why these populations (after a suitable exhibition of brute force on our side) have always loyally submitted, without any backsliding having occurred, even at the most critical moments of our wars. That

is why, before the present happening [the Riff insurrection] . . . we have held the entire country with only 20,000 Frenchmen. But that was only possible because we had the entire support of the Sultan . . . of whom I appear merely as the lieutenant, as well as the complete adherence of the Mussulman populations, in whose eyes I enjoy the quasi-religious prestige derived from my close association with the Caliph. —Should we tomorrow dissociate our cause from that of the Sultan . . . everything would at once collapse. . . .”

The second quotation is from a different period of his life—it is the Commandant Lyautey at Tonkin speaking: he is seen, according to his adversaries, “coquetting with divine right” in favor of Than-Tai advancing the most retrograde principles. (He has just been invited to a reception at the palace.) “And what do I care,” this Machiavellian colonial administrator cries, “for the stories of his vices—” *la gale de son petit frère*, “the Neroism he may practice in his palace. Is he not the grandson of Gia-Long and of Minh-Mong, the last of the Nguyen? He is the great social force of this empire of twenty million inhabitants—at whose passage these populations abase themselves in the dust, from whom a movement of the little finger is a despotic command, and Heavens! let us make use of all this, and do not let us seek to undermine this force, since we hold the ends of the wires that operate it; let us say to ourselves that neither direct administrative control on our part,

nor yet all the technical competence of such as Mr. B. . . . or Mr. M. . . . can ever replace it."

To leave everything scrupulously *just as he found it*—such was the policy of Lyautey. He left the Sultan of Morocco with just as much, indeed rather more, power than he had upon the intrusion of the French—the Cherifian umbrella still over his head—just as much periodic "powder play," the prayers still said in his name in the mosques. If an indigène commits a burglary or stabs or cheats another, he "goes up before the Pascha," just as before. And a really incredible scrupulosity has been shown in leaving souk, kasbah and village intact—except perhaps for a surreptitious house-drain or two, and numbers painted upon the doors of the houses of the Medina, to guide the postman, I suppose.

These are the *romantic politics*, as they have been called, of Lyautey. If Lyautey had been Governor of Paris, the boulevards, fairs and markets would still be there intact, and the wholesale destruction of historic landmarks would not have been tolerated. But it is not difficult to see how this anxious consideration for the local-color of the Berbers must have enraged the "sociolo-communist" elements that had to stand by and watch it, also those who wished to see a clean sweep of the old life, in order to be able to secure lucrative contracts for the Europeanization of Morocco. No. *Nothing must be touched or changed*: there all the Europeans, come out there to get rich quick, had to remain at a respectful distance.—*Respect for what?* For the Berber filth, the useless bric-

à-brac? The only way the military, under Lyautey's orders, could keep them all at a distance was to label as much as possible *Zone d'Insécurité* (*Zone Militaire*—*Zone Interdite*) and to explain how terribly dangerous the Berbers were—though there were plenty of non-Berbers in Morocco competent to know that there was nothing dangerous about the poor child-like Berber, and whose fingers were itching to get at the loot.

Probably in the administration of the High Atlas more than elsewhere this romantic policy inaugurated by Lyautey was violently criticized and bitterly resented. Colonel Huot (a "creature" of Lyautey's in the language of his enemies), director of Affaires Indigènes, made a radical distinction between the condition of affairs in the north of Morocco, and those in the south. The "Great Caïds" of the Atlas—that was a very different affair to the petty chiefs of the north, said Huot.

According to these "dissidents," of White complexion, the "Great Lords of the Atlas" was a romantic invention—for which the Tharaud Brothers were mainly responsible (cf. *Les Grands Seigneurs de l'Atlas*). And the Tharauds were the mouthpiece of the Lyautey clique and of the "romantic" Lyautey policy. The Opposition would not hear of Si Madani, or Hadj Thami, his brother (who poisoned the former, so they said, as both have poisoned so many other people), grandsons of a Saharan salt-seller (with far more than a drop of Negro blood), being compared with Cæsar Borgia. *Cæsar Borgia!* they

cried—what next! The glamour of the European Renaissance they swallowed whole! But they refused *any* glamour to the personages who prevented them from getting into the Atlas and initiating there *de fructueuses affaires*—and all thanks to the “romantic politics” of Marshal Lyautey, and even more of General de Lamothe: for much as Lyautey has been abused, that was as nothing to the oceans of vitriol heaped upon de Lamothe, the Governor of Marrakech. If the Vieux Marocains of Marrakech had been as quick with the arsenic as those pseudo-Borgia Berber upstarts—created “great feudal nobles” by the “romantic politics” of Lyautey and de Lamothe—de Lamothe would have disappeared, the victim of a tainted stuffed pigeon, or subsequent to a succulent but suspect couscous, years before he did.

Tears of commiseration have been shed in print over the lot of de Lamothe’s successors. Take that poor chap, General Dangan.

Here is an excellent bit of local Marrakech history. In 1924 Si Taieb, the Caïd of Goundafa (one of the three “Great Lords of the Atlas”), had been successfully put in his place—the pretext being his disgraceful treatment of the poor *fellahs*, his subjects. Encouraged by this, the general at Marrakech, General Dangan, thought he would have a kick at Hadj Thami—“the Glaoui” in fact, the greatest of all the “Lords of the Atlas.” This “man of powder” must be pulled down. Now is the moment, thought Dangan. So he orders the pascha to be sent for, and awaits him in his bureau.

Hadj Thami had, however, seen this coming. He arrived at the bureau covered with all the orders and decorations showered upon him by the predecessors of General Dangan.

The moment he was shown in the general said to him:

"I have been asked to request you to withdraw from Marrakech temporarily, where far too many complaints are to be heard on your account, sir . . . !"

The Glaoui (Hadj Thami) did not move a muscle while the general was speaking (although he understood French perfectly) but sat and waited for his interpreter formally to convey to him in Arabic the sense of the general's words. When, however, the interpreter said "the general desires you to withdraw from Marrakech," the Glaoui leapt to his feet, tore the decorations off his chest, and glaring down upon the representative of France, he shouted:

"I am the Pascha of Marrakech. I shall not leave!"

"I have my orders," said the general. "I shall see that they are carried out."

"In that case," bellowed the Glaoui, "tell your chief that if I am obliged to leave Marrakech, I shall only return at the head of my tribes!"

Flinging his decorations on the table under the nose of the general, he added:

"As to these, I shall not touch those trinkets again, except when I come here to recover them by force!"

This scene I have more or less translated from the account given by one of Lyautey's bitterest enemies. What did General Dangan do? Why, how can you

ask! Was not this a "Great Lord of the Atlas" after all! The general had never seen a Glaoui in a rage before. And, to be frank, he trembled a little in his shoes at the thought of the tempest he had provoked. So he sent round an apology a few hours afterwards, and after two or three more apologies had been dispatched, the Glaoui at last consented to overlook the offense, warning him, however, not to repeat it!

It is pretty certain that this action of General Dangan's was taken at the instigation of the civilian and political element, and that Lyautey (who was not kicked out of Morocco till the next year, 1925) sympathized entirely with the Glaoui. He probably knew exactly what would happen if they tried at Marrakech to monkey with this mountain lion (to use the imagery of the Tharauds) and must have been highly amused when he received Dangan's report of his discomfiture.

General Dangan left Marrakech shortly after this. "Ha ha!" shouted the enemies of the Lyautey régime: "There you are! NE TOUCHEZ PAS AU GLAOUI! Do not monkey with these sacrosanct 'barons' if you want to keep your job!"

From 1913 to 1919, General de Lamothe stops at Marrakech, in the teeth of the screaming opposition of a world of angry "pioneers" of all nations thirsting to fling themselves upon the Atlas, expropriate the Berbers, and get rich quick in this new colonial eldorado—which would have been bled white in a decade, and after that have been a mountainous burden, merely, upon the taxpayer of France—an *Atlas* in-

deed! And Lyautey was hand in glove with de Lamothe.

But, said Lyautey's enemies, what could you expect of such a man? Had he even made a secret of his preferences—for all that was feudal? His *Cecil-Rhodisme* was an established fact. With the "Great Lords of the Atlas" he was entirely at home. Their feudalism was very much to his taste! And the pens of the Tharaud Brothers, and others of the same sort, were mobilized to build up this feudal legend. Listen to this Tharaudist account (exclaims indignantly the Opposition) of a "Great Lord of the Atlas"—listen and reflect!

"Here is El Hadj Thami Glaoui, Pascha of Marra-kech, younger brother of Madani, splendid *seigneur*—lover of war, of magnificent buildings, all the luxuries of the Occident and the Orient at once—fine arms, great motor-cars, and who, with his long spare face and large eyes, his feline air, at the same time gentle and violent, his enigmatical smile, the dandyism of his toilette . . . recalls (rather paradoxically, upon this frontier of the Sahara) a French or Italian feudal noble of the fifteenth century," a *figure of the Renaissance*.

Great play has been made of this "enigmatical smile": and of course the Tharauds were journalists, and they expressed themselves in the picturesque manner of the latter-day French. But what is the truth underneath these violent recriminations—where are we to look for that point of equilibrium where the good sense that is divorced from passion

may be securely laid hold of? I should say (and I have no interest at stake) that if the spurious romantic heightening of a "Borgia" (whether of Rome or of the Atlas or Sahara) is attackable as a piece of sensationalism, that equally the political principles of those who assail all this a little too obvious ikonography betray also a romantic bias that is at least equally false. The doctrinaire democracy of Lyautey's opponents is founded upon one illusion: Lyautey's "feudalism" upon another. But mines, hotels, and intensive farming and gardening all over the Atlas would not make the average Berber healthier, happier or wiser. It would only put money in the pockets of some remote anonymous Boss. You would be putting "Big Business" in the place of "Feudalism." A few harassed "pioneers" would make a few extra pence for a half-dozen summers and winters, then the bubble would burst. This is not merely the standpoint of the artist, it is also common sense, I think.

Again, whatever you like to call the great Caïds of the Atlas, it is undeniable that El Madani Glaoui was the ruler of a territory that could have made a quite respectable kingdom. To say *The Kingdom of Glaoui* would not be inaccurate, having regard to its extent and power. Not counting his soldiers and police, the kasbah of Si Madani housed five hundred people. If Hadj Thami at some ceremony at Marrakech remained on horseback, alone, when the other caïds approached the Sultan to kiss the hem of his garment, no one protested. And that was natural enough, for was he not far more powerful in fact than the Sultan?

And if Lyautey's policy was to treat with this super-caïd upon a special footing, I should imagine that it would be difficult to show, before an impartial tribunal, that he was wrong. The French are still at war in the Middle Atlas. In the Anti-Atlas it is the same. But the High Atlas has never given them any trouble. Peace reigns in the High Atlas, but *on condition* that they leave the caïds where they found them. And in any case, they are being eliminated by economic means, it seems, much more effectively than they would have been by force of arms. Only the Glaoui "kingdom" is today intact.

But Si Hammou, of that dynasty, is reputed to have said, "*The time will come when the People of the South will establish out of their own resources a Berber Kingdom.*" And (as everywhere else) the actual root of the business, and reason for the great violence with which Lyautey was attacked, was LAND. The Great Caïds refused to allow their subjects to sell land to the foreigner: and they employed every method and weapon at their disposal to prevent the transfer of a single acre. A hundred stories of violence done to some Berber peasant who was about to sign away his patrimony to the "Nazarene" is told by the opponents of the Lyautey régime.

Here are the words of the advocate of that Opposition I have mainly used in the foregoing exposé of the anti-Lyautey case.

"A entretenir dans les tribus, l'idée dangereuse que les Caïds défendent la liberté de leurs territoires en s'opposant aux vente de terres par les indigènes, quel

but poursuit-on? Veut-on fermer simplement le Sud Marocain au peuplement français?" etc.

When El Hadj Thami says to his people, "If you want to sell your land, sell it to *me*—don't sell it to the foreigner!" he should decidedly be checked. That is very "dangerous"! It is also highly inconvenient for all the real-estate agents and that swarm of adventurous folk like our jolly red-faced compatriot of Agadir (who operated at Marrakech before he went to the Sous).

Whether it is the M'Tougi, or one of the Khalifats or El Hadj Thami, or Goundafi, or Ayadi, or the Ouriki, the Caïd M'Soudi, the cry is always the same! "*Any sale of land to a foreigner is an offense in the eyes of Allah!*"

But what do we find that Lyautey—representative, after all, of the "foreigners" in question—does in all this? He supports the caïds, and so *assists* in preventing the "foreigners" from getting the land out of the Berbers—protected (for selfish motives) by the caïds. Why, he is scarcely behaving as a White Man even!

The literature of this subject is full of tales of poisonings, of people found murdered, the title-deeds of their land vanished out of the corpse's pocket, of shady lawyers, of Arab clerks who are deft forgers of old Hassani title-deeds, and *ansi de suite*. It is a mist of speculation and peculation, and it is all about LAND.

In the Sous, at Agadir, it is just the same thing. Land, *Land*—*Land* is the cry! There you are told all the old stories as soon as you get there of Germans found murdered at Imsgan, bundles of title-deeds of

land vanished into the blue out of the victims' pockets, of the interminable faking and forging of documents, of all-time-jobs for masses of crook notaries, of the incessant overtime of unscrupulous Arab scribes. One particular old ruffian is proudly pointed out to you as being the star-poisoner of the district (and romantic Anglo-Saxons when they visit those parts, as I have said, are taken to tea with him—the thrill of thrills—oh, observe how he lets you drink first, in *case* the pot has been tampered with!).

So Agadir is much what Marrakech was some years ago. There is of course no right or wrong in all this violent mess, all are in different degrees to blame. Everyone is a *filibuster* of some sort who is installed upon the territory of a race that is not his own. Lyautey—yes, Lyautey was a filibuster too. Extend the term far enough, Lord Irwin at Delhi was a filibuster.

Then, of course, the romantics, of one order and another, are as much ugly customers as the plain unvarnished sharks, if not more so. It is impossible not to pity the Berber peasants. And of all the enemies of these distracted people, those who advertise themselves as the “friends of the oppressed” are apt to be the biggest ruffians of the lot, as is always the case, we know.

Such are the dark backgrounds against which the brilliant figure of Lyautey has been silhouetted. It is a picture full of irony. This great “Man-of-action,” the disciple of Vogüé and De Mun—is (how can one tell? but one has that sensation) perfectly scrupulous—a passionate *ambitieux* no doubt, but one whose

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hands have not been dirtied with money at least. So this chivalrous monument is destined in history to stick up paradoxically in this African and Levantine landscape, the gloved and booted statue of a typical Gentleman, in the military uniform of a radicalist Republic.—It is a very odd position to have chosen for this statue. Destiny has amused herself!

CHAPTER V.

THE CLUBMAN FILIBUSTER OF THE NINETIES

(Portrait by R. B. Cunninghame-Graham)

IT WOULD be a great pity, since you are getting such an insight into the filibuster up-to-date, for you not also to become acquainted with Major Spilsbury. That gentleman has been immortalized in Mr. R. B. Cunninghame-Graham's book *Maghreb el Aksa* (which will be read again some day—it is one of the daintiest dishes of “the nineties”).

“Quiet but determined, a linguist, leader of men, and one of those willing to risk his life ten times a day for any syndicate, upon most reasonable terms, Spilsbury was a born filibuster.” There you have Cunninghame-Graham's strong, silent hero.

Evidently little has altered in those regions since 1896, except in the rather important matter of *personnel*. There has been a sad change in the quality of the personnel. There are still men possibly willing at a pinch to risk their little fingers, now and then, and at a price, for any well-backed passably open-handed syndicate. And their terms I am positive are “reasonable,” as of old. But whereas we gather that Major

Spilsbury was a gentleman, as well as "a born filibuster," today the filibusters are not gentlemen. That is an important difference, because, not being gentlemen, they probably make less good filibusters. It is, I think, freely admitted in all the best informed circles and by all the best organized "syndicates," that the best filibusters are what we call gentlemen. The bounder (or worst of all, the demi-gent, the inclined to be "refayned"), he busts up a shade too soon, or a fraction too late! That is fatal.

No really important "syndicate" can at present be working that coast. Such is the conclusion to which I reluctantly came. Else there would be a lot of really top-drawer filibusters down there—instead of rather high-strung ex-temporary army-toffs—with their nerves not adequately under control. Spilsbury now was a lad of a different temper. "But for an accident," Cunninghame-Graham assures us, "Spilsbury might have been Emperor of Agadir." Today there are no people of that caliber in the Sous. There are no potential "Rajahs of Sarawak" upon the horizon of the Oued Sous or the Oued Noun. I am sorry to have to admit, for the credit of my own latter-day account of these parts, that this should be the case. We are shown Spilsbury in a London Club of the nineties, who "sat smoking quietly without a trace of 'Union Jackism.'" It is very aggravating, but I am compelled to admit that "Union Jackism" is rampant today in those latitudes. "No word" with Spilsbury "of moral purpose, not a suggestion of being . . . a sort of John of Leyden going to set a people free." How different

to the vulgar emancipatory humbug so prevalent among the half-baked Bulldog Drummonds into whose hands this captivating "trade" of Captain Wyndham's has fallen. You see Spilsbury, the pure type of the *gentleman-filibuster*, as opposed to the coarse flag-wagger or vulgar humanitarian who affects to be the friend of the "poor native" (who inveigles the poor fellah into transactions undertaken oh! entirely on his behalf, and then proceeds to rob him of his land or whatever else he may possess).—*Spilsbury* was the genuine article. He was the real British *luxury-object*—for export in small quantities, but guaranteed to stick together and do the work of any "syndicate" through thick and thin, on a minimum of pay. "Simply an ordinary clubman, talking of what he was about to do, as he had talked of fishing in Lock Tay." Ah, that Scottish touch—ah me! Lock Tay! "A well-dressed quiet-mannered filibuster, not bellowing that he would make the Arabic language popular in Hell, after the 'fighting Bob Tammany style. . . .'"

But it does one good to think of Spilsbury all the same—it is the bouquet of a filibustering vintage that is lost! How the whole thing began was this (as the Pukka Sahibs with their cheroots would say in a Conrad story). About the year 1896, in Mogador, "appeared Captain Geyling, a Jewish Austrian subject, who, by some means or another got into communication with certain discontented chiefs, whom he induced to sign a treaty with him to open up a port, start trade with the interior, work the mines, and generally to allow the country to be brought under

the humanizing influence of European trade. This done, he straight repaired to London, and tried to form a company, but found out, as Lydgate did before him, that 'lacking money he might never speede.' Then came a hiatus, which perhaps some of the gentlemen who planked their money down may like to fill up for the benefit of those who take an interest in unofficial efforts to extend the shadow of our flag."

We next find Captain Geyling back in Morocco, dressed in a single-breasted black frock-coat and fez, and turned in the interval into a pseudo-Turk under the title of Abdul Kerim Bey. Here, history says, as the advance agent of the *Globe Venture Syndicate* "he travelled like a prince, taking as many tents as would befit a travelling menagerie, plate and more plate, servants and horses, mules, guns, presents for the Caïds, and impelled by a consuming thirst to get concessions for his paymasters."

In talking over *the filibusters of the Sous* with a friend of mine, he drew my attention to this filibuster of Mr. Cunninghame-Graham's, and I naturally thought at first when I began the story in the Appendix of *Maghreb el Aksa*, that this sinister Captain Geyling, "in a single-breasted black frock-coat and fez" was the man. Perhaps he was the higher power of filibusterism of the two—for I have always found that behind any open and palpable filibuster, especially a British one, there is always another filibuster, lurking in the background, much bigger than the first. And this is true of any filibusters, however poor in quality, and lacking *race*. Thus at present the

shoddy and cheery filibusters of the Sous are the mere shadows—however stout their persons—of other filibusters, resident at Casa or Mogador: and in case of emergency they have to hurry off to those distant spots to get their orders.

But Captain Geyling took Major Spilsbury in his train—though why the latter “let himself be towed about the place by Geyling only he can tell.” But this was Spilsbury all over! For “he was never richer by any” of the schemes in which he embarked. This trip was unsuccessful. Geyling “returned to Mogador, and in a little inn kept by a Jew quarreled with Spilsbury, who, if reports be true, threatened to beat him with a stirrup-leather, and the companionship broke up.”

Spilsbury only *threatened* (is not that most typical?), you remark, even in the “report,” to beat the Austro-Jewish *fantoche* in the “single-breasted black frockcoat and fez”: but this was quite sufficient for Geyling, who flew back to Vienna, or Novi Bazaar—“or for all I know joined his repatriated co-religionists in their new colony in Palestine.” But Spilsbury remained in Mogador. Our hero then “embarked upon a series of adventures, the more extraordinary when one remembers that he speaks no Arabic.” But he meets Mr. Ratto. That sealed his fate. Ratto was his master: “born in Mogador, and speaking Arabic, and Shillah, French, English, Spanish, and apparently all other tongues with equal ease.” A most gifted and masterful person but needing a Spilsbury, somehow, to complete him! With Spilsbury it was a case really

of *And then he met—Another Squire!* Mr. Ratto amply compensated for the loss of Abdul Kerim (as Captain Geyling called himself, to account for the fez).

The polyglot Ratto probably disguised the honest major as an Arab (knowing the weakness of all Englishmen to dress up in that fashion, one can guess that—Graham does not tell us so) and led him, by devious paths, only known to Ratto, into the interior of Morocco. There, taking advantage of the unsettled state of the country, the Sultan being away at the moment on a punitive expedition, and the stage being set for the darkest conspiracies, Ratto and our hero “entered into negotiations with some of the chiefs of the wild tribes of the Sus”—taking advantage of “the desire which every Arab chief has of getting arms to make himself quite independent of mankind.”

Then Ratto goes down a trapdoor, or just goes back to Mogador. At all events, he had started Spilsbury off, that is sufficient—he took no further active part in the plot as far as we are informed; though we gather from Mr. Graham that he did not lose interest in it.—Spilsbury returns to London.

This resourceful filibuster then “seems to have satisfied the Syndicate in London that they could trade direct with the Sous, receive concessions from the chiefs, land and construct a factory, and in time make themselves sole masters of the place. No doubt they reasoned: If we are once established, when troubles come, England must protect her subjects. . . . What treaty Spilsbury took home is matter for conjecture,

but not unlikely he got signatures from chiefs, who signed, thinking if all went well they would gain something, and if things turned out badly they could say they had been deceived, and signed a document that they had not understood. One name it is certain was appended to the deed, that of M'barek-ou-Ahmed, who is now securely chained, in some pestilential prison in Fez or Mequinez. Be all that as it may, Spilsbury was shortly back again in Mogador, trying to hire a vessel to convey himself, a Jew interpreter, and several samples of his goods down to Akssis, a port between Wad Nun and Agadir. But by this time the Sultan had got wind of the affair, and sent his emissaries into the Sous to bribe the chief into allegiance, and what is more he had communicated with the English Ambassador in Tangier, who having sent the news to London, the expedition and its aims was laid before the Foreign Office. Presently an official notice appeared declaring that the British Government viewed with concern the meditated attempt to open trade with a part of the Emperor of Morocco's territory against his will, and if any person went for such a purpose, he must go at his own risk. Spilsbury probably cared nothing for the protection or the displeasure of either Government, so he pushed on his preparations just as if nothing had occurred worth mentioning."

But the hostility of England made things difficult; our hero chartered a schooner in the Canaries, and set sail for Akssis. There several thousands of Berbers were encamped with their chiefs (dispatched there by

the mysterious many-tongued Ratto). Here was our hero, upon "a coast not visited twice in a century by Europeans, and in the hands of men who kill a man with as few compunctions" as they kill a chicken. All went well, the Sous was about to be handed over to this syndicate, when there was suddenly a violent row (one of the sheiks had not been paid enough, and he charged into the camp shouting "Death to the Roumi!"). The gallant major jumped back into the schooner, and left, chased by a ship of the Sultan's. He made his get-away, and reached Las Palmas without further mishap.

When Cunninghame-Graham met him in the London club, our filibuster had a steam-yacht at Greenwich taking on board 9,000 rifles to arm the sheiks of the Sous.

Off he went in his steam-yacht, and got safely to Akssis, began to unload the rifles—all seemed panning out beautifully: but he was surprised by the Sultan's troops. He beat a retreat, again pursued by vessels of the Sultan's which, as before, turned up malapropos, with which he exchanged shot for shot. Almost the Spanish Main! That is the end of the story.—Our hero may still be alive.

How much better guarded the coast was by the Sultan than it is by the French or Spanish! The schooner of our "Clubman" filibuster of the nineties would today have found schooners, brigantines and yawls of all descriptions passing and repassing him—for according to all accounts, arms are pouring into Mauretania from Las Palmas all the time. This coast,



The immense and desolate empire of the Touaregs stretches from the Hoggar to Mauretania and the Rio de Oro.



In the sheltered patio of the Arab house, the women may enjoy privacy amid flowers and luxuriant foliage.

"which is one of the most deserted in the world," is certainly not frequented by anything but smugglers, but by those today it is infested. Only, the power of France does not reach beyond Agadir, on the coast. So there is no danger of interruption from anyone in the world. It can scarcely be called *smuggling*, in fact.

I hope this portrait of the clubman-filibuster of the nineties lifted (with apologies) out of the brilliant and lively pages of Mr. Graham's book, will have served the purpose of showing the unalterable nature of this coast—how, from the days of Wyndham, in 1552, until this year (the year of the bursting of the capitalist War-debt Bubble) the Sous and its southern marches have been the haunt of that queer bird, peculiar to European climes, *the filibuster*. Filibusters change from age to age. In the elegant nineties they were "clubman-filibusters"—Champagne Charlies on the piratic lay. Today they are middle-class Stockbroker's clerks, ennobled by the Great War into "majors" or "lieutenant-colonels." But the more the Sous changes (and however the quality—never the quantity—of its filibusters may deteriorate) the more it is the same thing, from age to age.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLED HOTEL

SO IN the very teeth of one obstructive filibuster, the Union Jack one, with the sham-farm, in an atmosphere rank with "capitulations" and with veiled *Verbots*, I went to the country of the Ikounka. I went across the Ikounka country, I saw their communal fortresses. But I did not visit these embattled "shops" of the Ikounka, as things turned out, but went farther along the Atlas instead. How this came about I will briefly relate.

By five in the evening of the day in question, there I was with the permission. I had an army at my back, that meant. It was the most powerful army of any—the army with THE FRANC behind it.

But if I was equipped with this exclusive permission, it was literally in the teeth, as I have said, of the world of Agadir, and moreover it was not at all thanks to the landlord of this glittering little Bled Hotel—who vanished into thin air at the critical moment. It was a very odd affair indeed, that of the permit—officials upon one's side to a man, most anxious to provide one with every facility, for innocent studies—but

every non-official banded to circumvent this touristic trespass (by passive resistance and by strategic *vanishes*). I have never before this found myself with the status of a commission sent to pry into an abuse—Dreiser in Kentucky could not have been met more sullenly (avowed Nosy-Parker that he was there) than was I in the Valley of the Sous, in contact with “British Interests.” So little am I concerned with politics, however, that even now I am at a loss to imagine what particular Bluebeard’s Chamber I was supposed to threaten to burst into or about which I might, had I blundered on it, blab.

Borzo was the name of the Patron of this Splendide-Astoria of the Bled. He was an Italian ex-legionary, who, like every Italian, in or out of uniform, thought in terms of *hotels*. His time being up in the Legion (which according to his own account he likewise did his best to turn into a sort of hotel—a Hotel-on-the-march as it were, in his capacity of commissariat non-com), he received his last month’s pay, I suppose—he stepped out of the barracks (in a cracked pair of patent leather shoes, I am sure) once more a civilian—lighted a cigarette (inhaling very deeply indeed with his eyes closed up tight), went at a rather precipitate shuffle round the corner, and founded a hotel. He founded a hotel as naturally as a German would go round the corner and enlist again—in a second army, having served his time in the first. It must, I imagine, have not been far from Agadir that he took his farewell of his mercenary duties in the African battalions of France. He probably went straight to the nearest

house-agent, rented the nearest available Arab house, converted the central court into a restaurant, put palms all over it, collected a half-dozen other Italians, had *Hotel* painted in giant type upon the whitewashed wall of the house he had rented, and started being a hotel-keeper, without thinking twice about it.

He did not engage an Italian cook, however, but a German one. The reason for that was that the idea of Germany excited him very much. He had come under the spell of Germany. He was so Germanophile that the chef was the principal personage in the hotel. He was Germanophile to an eccentric degree. Whenever the opportunity presented itself he spoke (or rather gave forth in a headlong staccato buzz) the bastard German of the Legion—German, that is, mixed with Berber, French, Arab, Neapolitan and even English.

He was well-pleased with me at first. But slowly, as the days wore on, his manner changed. He had been seduced by the filibusters, who were now in open revolt at my continued presence in the place. I am quite aware that this will sound as if I were romancing. But romancing it certainly was not for me, the protagonist on the spot. As protagonist on the spot I was compelled to bear the full brunt of the *agon*. And at certain moments the pressure was extremely severe.

On the morning of the day on which I got permission, it had been arranged between us that Borzo should take me to the military in the morning at ten. But he was absent all the morning and did not go

with me to the military. Ten came and went. There was no sign of Borzo whatever. Eleven found me at my window, still sweeping the roads approaching and receding in vain. Twelve, and still no Borzolino. At one, breathless and heavily buttonholed, rushed up to his hotel this small, careworn, shabbily-elegant stuttering Italian, with profuse apologies to me. It had been quite *impossible* for him to get back—he had had to go to The Captain upon business of his own. Yes—to the Captain. Yes, to the *same* Captain! It was the *Captain*, what! There was only *one* Captain! Why had he not fetched me? (For *that* was where I too had wanted to go?) Yes, *he knew* I had wanted to go—he was exceedingly sorry but he had been detained at the market!—And so forth.—I bowed. That afternoon, when the luncheon siesta was over, I would go by myself.

When Mr. Cunninghame-Graham tells you, in the manner more or less that just now I have employed above, how mere Berbers—caïds, “native” agents, Jews or Turks—tended to put obstacles in his way—why, you believe him at once! Why not! Was not he in a wild land? In dealing with “natives” one must expect both ferocious obstructiveness, and contemptible deceit!

Well, I tell you that Britons are just as bad as Berbers, and their personnel of mulatto Americans, and “Serbians” hidden behind smoked glasses (quite according to film canons)—why, they are as bad as scheming Oriental caïds and Congo “chamberlains.” After all, why not? Why should not the poor Briton

have his schemings? Is not the European capable of plots?

But there is a law, an unwritten law, perhaps, and it is this. Nothing proper to Chicago can happen in London: all "Orientals" (it is in their nature) are *mysteriously* obstructive and untruthful! Britons never! To tell about your *adventures among Europeans* in the same tone you would use for adventures among "Orientals"—that is absurd.—I have offended. I apologize and pass on: in extenuation all I can suggest is that I am not an ordinary man and it may be I dislocate the pattern of the personalities in my neighborhood.

By five or six I had the permission and letter at all events. The hotel-car rushed round the hill with me. Borzo sat in the office of the hotel, his buttonhole awry, his face in his hands. But before his treachery I had agreed to go in his car. So I struck him on the back—I knew the cause of his torpor. It was *me*.

At seven in the morning the car must be there. We arranged. It was a long journey inland into the Anti-Atlas. Most of the route was by way of tracks or *pistes* not roads. It was not only Zone of Insecurity, it was on the edge everywhere of the line of "dissidence." None of the available chauffeurs in the town were acquainted with the tracks, they had never been at all to some of the places I was to visit. A sugar and tea merchant in a large way of business loaned Borzo, my patron, his Berber boy-mechanic for the day, with him a dignified young Mohammed who (if the military failed in their duty) would pass me through the

Ikounka villages, and if possible fortified shops, as he was friends with an Ikounka *amghar*, or small chief.—I went all over Agadir as well to buy films for my camera. When at last the Russian, who called himself “Serb,” of the Bazaar du Sous, had disgorged two small 26 × 6 Kodak packs—the *pellicules*—the hotel rang me up at Barrutel’s to say the packet of films sent for the day before had arrived from Mogador. (The “Serb” had a monopoly of the film-trade of the town: he created an artificial scarcity, because he wished to sell a type of camera (at 900 francs) which did not take the Kodak. Of the film required for that camera there was a surprising abundance. It was on sale everywhere.)

That night was a red-letter night in the Splendide-Astoria, in my little hotel. All the flying Aces in the Sous and several naval pilots were meeting there. The German chef had made a colossal piece of Fatherland pastry to flatter the ornamental Air boys and the big Air magnates expected—a flight-colonel from Marra-kech, and a fat much-begallooned deep-seat air specialist of the French Fleet, and perhaps the commandant himself.

I talked with Signor Borzo, shamming sick in his office. The young Mohammed and the chauffeur were there. Holding his head in both hands because it ached worse than ever, Borzo swore he had marched, three years before, with a column, over the route we were to take (which he had helped to make, besides) and he kept stammering to the chauffeur, “Don’t forget the *second* bend—it is not the first. Don’t be de-

ceived! I know—I built it!” And the Mohammed lent me by the big grocer nodded his head: there *was* that hairpin bend, yes! Evidently the patron had been there—he had built it, perhaps. Mohammed surveyed the Italian rat before him (curled up with neuralgias that came partly from *bhang* or *kiff*, partly from annoyance with me) evidently wondering why on earth he did not go and get cupped, since he was patently in need of it, but he was too contemptuous or fairly urbane to suggest it.

I took out a map. Mohammed did not like the map: he could not read and felt at a disadvantage. There was the identical hairpin bend! Borzo pointed. This was in the *dir*, or outer wall, of the Anti-Atlas, through which you climbed into the interior of the mountains—it was after this hairpin bend you entered the territory of the Ikounka.

I was a month with this patron. I was a guest not an employee, but I can say *I was with this patron*. As one of the household I suffered from his headaches and constant moral collapses beneath the pressure of the hostile filibusters. Business Ups and Downs drove him to bed often, he scuttled to a drug-cabinet, or a snuff-nest: every day he would sit in his office, his head buried in his hands. He must get married he said—a German or perhaps an English woman, the best for this business—he thought English—it was essential. All he had in the world was the cat, *Tellurio*. The animal was Tellurio after his youngest, and his fairest, brother—all of them killed at Caporetto, one after the other, Tellurio first (the youngest), and he

would wipe tears from his eyes as he howled after his cat, "Tellurio! Tel-LUR-io!"

Of course, God knows if the man ever had a brother, much less as many as he said he had; he had formed this habit, of sucking up to strangers by way of his dead family—all killed, all decorated.

In Barbary all men are Mohammeds, all women are Fatmahs. You may find this convenient to remember if you go to Barbary. There is no Berber you would not be safe in addressing at once as Mohammed. The Europeans say "That Fatmah over there" meaning "That woman over there," just as the Americans say "That Jane over there." But the monotony in the men's names is even more marked. I never met a Berber who was not named after the Arab prophet. It is just as if every Englishman were called Bill, and every Irishman Patrick.

This Mohammed belonging to the big grocer was a *Si*. "He is a *Si*!" the patron insisted, stroking the headache out of one damp temple. "*Si* Mohammed! Oh, yes, he is a *Si*," said Borzo. "Mohammed is not a nobody, you know. He owns three houses. It is three houses isn't it, Mohammed, you own?" Looking at him from a distance, with extreme laziness, Mohammed nodded.

"Yes, three," he said, one eyebrow slightly raised, in shadowy disdain, a little on the lines of an embattled infant. This particular Mohammedan was so extremely good-looking after the manner of Guevara—though with a lighter touch, not heavy and Sephardic, but lordly and lovely, in the way that must make

us recall, when with the Berbers, the Tuscan and Roman *condottiere* princelings—that there was something grotesque about the title *Si* (that is roughly our *Sir*) and the slight pleasure, however languid, which he seemed to feel at the accolades of the preposterous Borzo.

I rushed to my window after dinner hearing loud cries, stamping and blows; and looking down into the dark lane I heard a heavy smack, smack, smack. It was the German chef. There he was in his white funnel cap. He was attacking with his fists a “native,” whose eyes he was blacking, or *poaching* perhaps one should say, since he was a chef. Each smack of the first, as the chef *poached*, and *double-poached*, an eye, then another eye, was met with a bellow of Berber rage. (The chef received no blows himself; a “native” does not return a blow, that is an understood thing.) The dark figure fell; the chef kicked it, after which he returned to his kitchen. The native rose, and after blubbering out a plethora of curses in pidgin French, he rushed away into the night; but not before his Berber pal in the kitchen had hurried over to him, and scratched and cuffed him on his own account for some minutes.

This was the Tragedy of a Tart. It was the *Gâteau Maison* that was the cause of the assault. The chef had spent all day making the *Gâteau Maison*, building up the rococo glaciers of the elaborate meringue. A small one had been specially prepared for a magnate in the next alley. One of the two Berber kitchen hands had been instructed to carry it upon a plate into the

next alley. But he had dropped it on the way. I had noticed before dinner as I went to the garage a fragment of the wrecked icing at the corner. I had not of course understood what it was. I had thought it was a wedge of froth from a gutter, with perhaps a paper frill from a box of dessert biscuits. That was where he had left it, where it dropped. The chef, walking down the lane—the Splendide-Astoria occupied all one side of this passage—to have a look over the gully at the end of it at the horizon of stony-road above us—the crest of our hill—and see if the hotel-car was coming along with the *Vigie*, the Casa paper, to see what crimes had been committed overnight worth reporting—chanced upon the icing, against the wall. He knew at once it was his cake. He recognized his handiwork, white-of-egg choked with dust, bisected peaches to confirm the dimensions of the accident.

I could see him, almost, hurl himself back upon his kitchen, in a swift scuttle of his carpet-slippers, his white headdress on the back of his head, as always, like a drunken pope. The boy was not there. How natural to decide to avoid the first paroxysm of the chef's displeasure! At last, however, hunger brought the wretch back, and I should not have minded seeing the chef, in his clown's kitchen get-up, white in the face as his spotless apron, charge out of the kitchen at the first faint whisper of the prodigal without, hitting the Berber with great smacks of his pallid fists—oh, that White Man's Burden! How the German understands!

I watched at my window—it is my business to know

everything, to watch and to wait. Soon the cook-boy was back, shrinking against the wall, there was a writhing shadow. He was shouting in the dark lane, addressing himself to the door of the kitchen. Borzo watched from the front door, beside the kitchen door, also the housekeeper. The chef went out and drove off his kitchen hand, whose face was badly cut—he retreated howling.

“Chef est un con—chef est un con!” the boy roared and whimpered, as he quickly returned, the chef once more back in his kitchen. Suddenly Borzo, who had been holding his head and inhaling deeply his cigarette, darted over and caught him by the arm. They struggled for a moment, Borzo was so weak and small, then he dragged him forward and bundled him roaring like a baby into the front door. The boy slept in a store-room beside the office, behind a curtain. That no doubt would be where Borzo would be putting him.

That was an evening pregnant with minor disturbances. A little later I was in the office when a native soldier, in full marching kit, entered the hall and stared into the office glassily at Borzo. Borzo scratched his chin and looked at him. Then he said:

“What do you want?”

“Nothing,” said the soldier.

Borzo got up.

“Yes, but after all, what do you want! You say nothing. You want something. What is it?”

The soldier did not move.

“Nothing,” he said as if in an angry trance.

After a few moments the soldier left.

Borzo shrugged his shoulders and buried his face in his hands.

"One is not allowed to serve them with drink," he said.

"Is it forbidden?"

"Oh, rigidly," said Borzo. "It is expressly forbidden. You must under no circumstances give them anything."

Mohammed, who lived near the hotel, in one of his three houses, came in to receive his final orders.

The soldier returned, and asked for wine. Mohammed got up and led him outside, telling him where to go to get some.

Then two native soldiers came into the hall, of a different regiment, also in marching equipment. They asked for some wine at once without beating about the bush. When Borzo said he had none, they replied noisily and angrily:

"Si, tu en as! Si t'as du vin donne!"

"Mais non, je t'assure que non. Ce n'est pas un café ici!" said Borzo.

"Si, c'est un café! Si, c'est un café!" exclaimed the soldiers.

"Je te dis que non! Ce n'est pas un café ici!"

"Une bouteille de vin!" said one.

"Du vin!" said the other. Both were drunk.

They soon left, muttering to each other in Chleuh.

"I don't know what's the matter with this place tonight!" said Borzo. "Everyone seems to have taken

leave of their senses. That's never happened to me. I don't know I'm sure!"

Mohammed lifted one eyebrow and looked at the table. Trailing his feet languidly in his canary-yellow babouches, he left, and Borzo went out and looked up and down the road. He then locked up, and the electric light went out. His light-plant in the garage fifty yards away kept the Arab neighbors awake, they said, the motor had to be stopped soon after ten. We went into the restaurant, Borzo carrying a lamp, and there we had a drink or two, Borzo talking all the time in German, as he always preferred to do—about Germany, his favorite country. Every variety of Saharan winged insect plunged about the globe of the lamp. An enormous locust clattered from spot to spot, as Borzo groped his way in imperfect German from one street to another of nightmare cities of the Reich—in a purposeless wandering, clutching his head. I left him about 11:50. He went to sleep in a chair, in his best suit as always, boutonnière and all, near the Chleuh kitchen-hand. There was no one sleeping in the hotel except us; there were the three waiters, there was the chef. Later on he got a lot of people suddenly—his hotel became renowned as the best restaurant of the South, within a month. Quite likely now it is not there—Mohammed may have bought it cheap when Borzo crashed.

CHAPTER VII.

INTO THE TERRITORY OF THE IKOUNKA

BORZO'S car was a large traveling saloon, it had no springs and when it was a bad piste the passenger was flung up to the ceiling, his head likely to protrude through a rent in the leather: but if underneath his foot, on the other hand, were not planted in the right spot it went down through a loose board. It was a car for Mr. Chaplin or for Groucho Marx, it was a true child of Borzo. Its doors opened, but only in response to extreme violence—when they flew open and hit anyone within reach, in tit-for-tat savagery. We filled up with petrol for five hundred kilometers. But after fifty kilometers the car stopped. The chauffeur was very surprised as it slowed down. But as a matter of fact there was no more petrol. It had all run away. There was a *fuite*. I was not surprised at all, except that it had gone so far. By this time we were in the desert bled. Luckily a kilometer behind us was an important military post. A teaspoonful of gas appeared to be left, and a Berber or two pushed us, so we got back and some rough repairs

prevented all the fresh petrol from running away. I bought petrol for another day's journey. Again we set off and were soon leaping along like a mechanical kangaroo. I could see nothing. If anything turned up, like a fort, I had to stop the car and look out.

Between Agadir and the Anti-Atlas it is mostly steppes. There is an argan wood, perhaps a kilometer across. Entering this there is a cactus hedge fifteen feet high: at night beneath the car-lamps the giant pods of steel-blue are a fascinating sculpture. It is a submarine world: in old woodcuts it could have been used for the lair of the sea-serpent.

All the flooring of this scenery is sand, it must be understood, sprinkled with large stones usually—a *pierraié*. There is nothing resembling grass. It is as a land phenomenally waterless: in the interior of the Great Atlas you get clear torrents, very cold in the Saharan heat, reminiscent of Gavarnie. Otherwise when a stream occurs, which is not often, it is the color of the sand and earth—tan or ruddy. The desert begins here in any case: beyond Biougra there is a village or two, but they are forts, and have no food-gardens to speak of—a few date-palms, great blue screens of cactus (*figue de Barbarie*), black goats, camels and asses.

It is a question every traveler in a country of steppes of this order must ask himself, how the people manage to live, especially seeing how waterless it is. Mainly, in fact, they live on their animals, and that they are able to do because the latter are semi-wild. To take the camel: for six months of the year the



The Rifians of the mountainous regions along the north coast of Morocco have maintained a fierce independence for centuries.



Tetuan is one of the principal cities of the Riff. It was founded in 1492 by Andalusian Moors.

camel does not work. He pastures. What that term, "to pasture," means, in a sand and salt steppe, is something that absolutely excludes what the European thinks of when you say "pasture" to him. On the camel's customary "pastures" he has a walk between any two mouthfuls—the little plants he finds are far apart, and they are not emerald green. Sometimes they require his lips of leather to eat them at all. But the camel again is "much nearer to nature than the horse"; he is, in fact, an antelope, not so very different from *Adax*, and he has never become domesticated like the horse. When, in his brief stops in an oasis, he is locked up and fed on grain and dates, he will, it appears, roar with indignation at these constraints upon his liberty and that unnatural food. He needs the nourishment that is found in the so-called "pastures" and the "great spaces" of the desert. And it is the same with the small black goat.

Under these circumstances, if you see a camel in the middle of a steppe, you will know that however barren this landscape looks to you, that for the half-wild antelope with the hump we call a camel, or the black Berber goat, it is a "pasturage." These beasts, with a few pigs, and a corn-garden hidden by cactus hedges, melons, walnuts and dates perhaps, oil from the argan tree, keep a family or two alive (with every fourth year a famine). It must be remembered that the Berber, unlike the Arab, works. He himself is very near to nature too, and can pick up a living from between the stones, turn the very salt of the steppe into a dollar or two, with those who need salt more

than he, and any flesh he can catch for food has a bath of argan oil to swim in anyway; and actually too soap can be had if necessary, picked as it were with the argan nut, for the Berber woman makes soap from that.

The Anti-Atlas does not rise from the plain as a steep wall—or appear to rather—as happens with the Great Atlas. Here the *dir* is fairly deep. When you reach the foot-hills, coming from Biougra, you turn north in the direction of Taroudant, follow them for some kilometers, then enter a long valley, with several villages upon hills and a certain amount of cultivation. The Roman Peace of the French has allowed a steady redemption of land from the wilderness, where there is water, and the Soussi is far more peaceful by nature than the Northern Moroccan. The mountaineers are much less warlike than the Riff, for instance. So there is not a great deal going on in this long entrance-valley, but there are a few fields here and there, and terraces of grain or fruit worked up on the mountainside, in the neighborhood of the hill-villages and forts.

It was a long and rough journey into the interior of the mountains. We encountered the much-discussed hairpin-bend and rattled round it all right—the Berber driver had been here to take the sugar and tea to the fort at Ait Baha, to which I was going to start with.

We now entered the territory of the Ikounka. Their fortified villages and *agadirs* were visible from time to time. One I approached and made drawings of, as

it had I think been one of those chosen by Dr. Montagne for illustration in his book. But at this point I shall put for you that excellent study of the ex-naval commander (hated by all the British filibusters of these parts) to whose industry we are indebted for most of the more technical information we possess of the civilization of this part of Africa.

In the first place the name, *Agadir*. This word simply means *fortress*. It is called indifferently, it seems, *agadir* or *ighrem*. Thus the town Agadir means fortress, in reference to the large kasbah on the top of the hill facing the sea—a conspicuous landmark, within and beneath which the original town was built. There are other agadirs in Maghreb, however, besides that particular historical town of *Panther* fame. Tlemcen was called Agadir to start with. Ajdir, the capital of Abd El Krim's Riffian Republic near Alhacemas, is the same word: and Ajdir in the North-East of the Gzennay a tribe. All mean simply "fortress."

The agadirs of the Anti-Atlas are communal stores—des magasins-collectifs. They are the last stage of an evolution that began, here and elsewhere, with the fortresses of the nomads. They started with caverns. The Touaregs still have such troglodytic hiding-places into which they lower themselves with cords, in which grain, dates and so forth are kept. A tribe of nomads would have something (however primitive their system of life) in the nature of a reserve store. However "nomadic," there would be a spot to which they annually returned. With the Touaregs it would be the recesses of the mountains of the Hoggar, for

instance. Everything cannot be carried about, especially reserves of food. And in some cases in the Atlas, a pastoral unit would build a sort of fortress, in the most inaccessible place it could find, and leave it in charge of guards during its pastoral wanderings in the finest months.

Then there is the transhumant stage—the tribe which is nomad half the year, sedentary half the year: half the year pastoral, half agricultural, or at all events a certain proportion of the year agricultural. There is in fact every stage between the nomad and the sedentary. And a central store or fortress, for a reserve of provisions and a surplus of goods, was as natural a notion as a “pirate hoard” or rallying-point for the corsair, that Nomad of the Ocean.—So whether as holes in the cliff, subterranean caverns, or fortresses or embattled store-rooms, wherever each family had its own particular vault or locker or safe, the agadir is an institution that was a concomitant of nomadism—of the more prosperous and developed nomadism. It was a small bank, if you like, of commodities, though later it has always served as well not only as a store for food, but also for any articles of value it was not desired to carry about, or that the family wished to put in safe keeping.

In the North of Maghreb these agadirs often take the form of a thatched village—built in the depths of a forest, or in the most inaccessible places of a mountain. It is a duplicate of the real village—a silent abandoned village with its streets and guarded approaches, beside the inhabited one—reproducing in

every respect the dispositions of the first, as regards the huts of the respective family units. But in the Sous this empty, this sham village, has become a *fortress*. It has assumed proportions of which no traces remain, at all events, in the north—though it may of course in the past have existed as an institution but long have fallen into decay, except for the few specimens left, in unsubstantial thatch.

To come more especially to the Ikounka, it is necessary to say, apparently, that the Ikounka are a very unimportant tribe, belonging to the Berber confederation of the Aichtouken. Even their agadirs or ighrems are not the most considerable or renowned. The reason Dr. Montagne chose them as the objects of this special research of his was owing (1) to the possession of a well-preserved, written, legal code for the management of their communal fortresses: and (2) owing to the fact that their geographical position lends itself especially to study and dissertation.

As to the code first: it is a copy of (who has for "father" as they say) a Code of the Ilalen, relating to the agadir of Ajarif. It deals mainly with the questions of theft and violence. If you accuse the porter of breaking into your lock-up shop and stealing anything, you have to prove it, or else pay a fine. If you make improper proposals to the porter's wife, you have to pay a fine. If you find clay in the wards of your padlock suggesting that someone has been tampering with it, in order to obtain an impression of your key, you have to report it to the porter. If you dig a hole in the earth in front of the door of your

neighbor's lock-up, causing rainwater to penetrate into his store and injure his grain, you have to pay a fine. If you draw your dagger within the precincts of the communal fortress, such and such a fine. Abusive language addressed to the porter, such and such a fine. Neglect to turn up when warned for duty, in the fortress, such and such a fine.—They are concerned with very simple ordinances for the protection of property, to protect the porter from personal attacks or unfounded libel, provide guards, etc.

The position of the Ikounka is, however, full of significance, and it is this that justifies the selection by Dr. Montagne of this unimportant fraction (one among fifty such) of the Achtouken. Their territory includes a valley called the *Imi Meggorn*: this means "The Great Entrance." This is in fact the main opening in the Anti-Atlas—the natural path into the heart of it, to the valley of Ait Baha (to which I was going on this occasion) and so, higher up, through a passage between the Jebel Kest and the Plateaus of the Ilalen, and so eventually into the Sahara, by way of the oases of Tamanart and of Ifran. (This "Great Entrance" is, however, an entrance of which Europeans have not the *entrée*. Beyond the military post of Ait Baha no European is permitted to journey. He can go there only if his friends or his government are prepared to pay for him a very heavy ransom—or if he can successfully disguise himself as a Jew.)

It was this very dangerous position upon a passage through a mountain wall—leading from the Sous into the Sahara—that necessitated the intensive develop-

ment of protective armaments on the part of the Ikounka.

All the tribes of the mountains have throughout been purely Berber. When the Sultan at Fez was a strong sultan, he established himself in the plains of the Sous, penetrated the mountains, planted his governors or caïds, and exacted fiscal tributes. Whenever a sultan died, there was the *siba*, or Berber revolt. Back all these hundreds of small republics went to their ancient constitutions, and were ruled by their councils of elders—until the next strong sultan came along with his *harka*, and once more they were forced to submit.

But there was here a distinction that in a minor way cut the Berber world in two. In the highest parts of the Atlas they never submitted. In the *dir*, on the other hand, upon the edge of the plain, they always submitted—they were forced to furnish contingents for the *harka* of the Sultan. This they did very much against their will. But in course of time these tribes of the *dir* came to be regarded as the allies of the Makhzen, or central Cherifian authority: whereas their brother tribesmen a little higher up were permanently “in dissidence.”

As a result of this situation, great confederacies grew up. These bore the name of *leffs*. These confederacies cut across the tribal relationship even. One half of the same tribal unit would be in one camp, one in the other.

The two great *leffs* of the Anti-Atlas and the Sous are respectively the Igezzoulen and the Ahoggwa. Of

these the former, the Igezzoulen, comprise the tribes that live in the mountains, the Ahoggwa those that inhabit the dir or the plain. The Achtouken are the most powerful tribe belonging to the latter confederacy, and the Ikounka are a small fraction of the Achtouken. Thus they may be classed as a people of the plain.

But what gives the Ikounka their importance is the fact that they were in every sense a border-state. When the siba occurred—when the authority of the Sultan was temporarily removed—the two hostile Berber confederacies not only withdrew from the shadow of the Central Authority but also flung themselves upon each other. The Igezzoulen, the mountaineers, flung themselves upon the Ahoggwa, the folk of the plain. And in the nature of things those of the dir, or foothills, were the first to receive the shock of this attack.

But the Ikounka were not only a border-people, placed where the great territories of the two great leffs more or less met: they were also gate-keepers, as it were, of the main route through the mountains to the Sahara. They were always the first to be visited by the Sultan making a raid, and the first to be visited by the mountain-leaguers on their way down into the plain. Hence the importance to them of their communal fortresses. Their position accounts for the fact that these institutions have remained intact with them later than with most of the other centers of the Achtouken. However, let me quote Lieutenant-Colonel Justinard upon this subject—in his book upon the Ait Ba Amran he devotes a great deal of

attention to it, and sifts the leffs (no easy task it would seem) in magistral fashion. Here is an illuminating passage from a magazine of ethnology, *Hesperis*:

Les Guezoula seraient à l'origine le grand leff des montagnards ayant luttée victorieusement contre les gens de la plaine ou du Dir pour leur enlever ou pour partager avec eux la possession *des bonnes terres*.

Les Aoggous seraient, à l'origine, les gens de la plaine, superieurs en nombre, en richesse,¹ mais non en valeur, guerrière, finalement vaincus par les montagnards, qui auraient laissé, en les imposant, des colonies dans la plaine.

And Colonel Justinard adds: "This explains how it is that there are Guezoula of the plain—Aglou, Ait Mader. There are tribes of the plain which are half-Guezoula, half-Aoggoua (Tiznit, Massa). The Aoggoua, we are told, are 'nouaib'—'ouin tafala'—that is to say *tributaries*—conquered by the steel, by the bayonette."

Before leaving the subject of the leffs, it may be as well to add that, in addition to the fact that you would find fractions of a mountain-leff—of the Berber masters or suzerains, in fact—among the people of the plain, so also all the wars occurring incessantly throughout the Sous and Anti-Atlas could not be put down to the antagonism of the two great confeder-

¹ This is of course the Ahoggwa of Dr. Montagne.

acies: nor would you invariably find all the combatants upon one side Igezzoulen,² all upon the other side Ahoggwa. "This composition of the tribes into *leffs*," says Justinard, "does not at all give a final picture, however, of the rival camps in the battles of the South. Many other factors enter into it. This was the case even before the arrival of El Hiba, or that of the French, had shaken and completely confused the working of the *leff* system. The Ait Ba Amram for instance are certainly Guezoula. But that does not prevent them (as with all the other Berber tribes) from possessing a hundred motives for war, even leaving out of count the fun of the thing. Not only between tribe and tribe, but between fractions of the same tribe, even of the same village."

In fact you have only to peruse the written Code of the Ikounka, regulating the affairs of the communal fortress, to see how it might quite well happen that at one and the same moment the Sultan might be attacking them from the plain and the Igezzoulen from the mountain, while in the heart of the agadir itself a bitter struggle might be in progress between two of the principal families, because a member of one had accused a member of another of putting clay in his padlock.

I think this foreshortened account of the agadir or collective (fortified) store will have enabled the Hurried Man to "glimpse," as he would hurriedly put it, the great historical interest, for me at all events,

² Dr. Montagne writes "igezzoulen"—there is little consistency in the spelling of these Berber names and places, and their adaptation into French.

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of these poor hill-niggers: and as actually I am not visiting the agadirs of the Ikounka but of a more distant tribe, in a state of even finer preservation, I can wait till I get there, in the course of my narrative, to describe what an agadir looks like and roughly how they go about its construction.

The Ikounka are not a very important *peuplade*, as I have said, and their villages are not impressive: even their agadirs are from the outside not much to look at. I say this to account for the fact that having come so far to see the Ikounka, fired with great interest by a perusal of Montagne, that having reached them I should neglect to go into their fortresses.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEAU GESTE OF THE GOUMS

ISSUING out of the Ikounka country, still upon the pleateaus inside the dir, not yet in sight of the central massif of the Anti-Atlas, a surprising village-block is met with. It is a village border-fortress, of an imposing sort, and the French have built their road to the military post of Ait Baha past its gates. The approach to it is across terraces of flat stones, almost like a dilapidated graveyard, over which a prodigious steam-roller had been driven. Or it could be described as a natural Crazy Pavement, of cyclopean proportions, laid down upon an irregular terrain, and so falling into terraces. Out of this enormous mountain flooring rose the battlements of the village. It had, I dare say, supported a thousand tribal sieges, and the harkas of more than one sultan had probably invested it, or ordered its men out to join it. Its great gate invited the battering ram. Its crenelations called for the stone catapult.

In Borzo's derelict car we charged across the Crazy Pavement and halted within snapshot of its walls, at my orders. A few tribesmen came up and gazed with

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awe at Borzo's car—their respect was not diminished by my hitting one in the face with the door, he having approached a little too near to observe me inside through the glass struggling to get out. I *shot* out, as the door flew open, camera in hand, the tribesmen scattering—except the one that was knocked down. I fiercely snapped the embattled village six times and returned to the car. As, however, I had bought the Kodak at a second-hand shop (paying more for it than I should at the Kodak headquarters new, of course) the shutter worked on the slow side, and I have a double image of everything in Maghreb in consequence. (My camera was a fit mate for Borzo's car.)

Rattling in every joint, we charged out of the village (I asked the driver to go quickly as we were late) and another long period elapsed during which I could see nothing, too busy with my experiences inside the car. Anyone watching us from a neighboring field would have supposed that Mohammed and myself were engaged in a death-struggle, as we clung to each other and were flung up and down and from left to right.

At last we reached a particularly lush plantation, where date-palms and bananas were joined by trees of a most extraordinary variety, for which, although I have described them carefully to an expert, I have not been able to find a name. It was a long elegant stem that rose to perhaps twenty or thirty feet out of a cactus-like plant. It had a bouquet at its summit.

Coming down beside this plantation, we found

ourselves faced, at the distance of a few hundred yards, by the walls of the French fort, the residence of the commandant of the district. A few kilometers farther was the ultimate frontier of the "dissidence"—that is to say, the territory of the mountain cantons that have not made their submission to the French. Beyond that line it is dangerous, if not impossible, to pass as I have indicated. Later I asked the commandant what would happen if I drove Borzo's car across that line. First of all, any road that can be described officially as "crossable" ends within a mile of Ait Baha. But allowing that it were possible to get the car forward at all, at the first village probably you would be stopped. You might not be attacked, that would depend upon the individual village. You would either have to go back or be taken before the sheik. At all events, there lay the frontier of the Zone of Insecurity (for a hundred kilometers we had been in what was technically that) but of that independent Berberdom—where all Europeans without distinction are regarded as interfering, dangerous enemies, and where, of course, the French exercise no control.

We stopped at the gate of the French post. It was a large gateway in a high white wall. Within was a large preliminary yard, then a spacious Arab court, of the usual pattern. All we could see was the palms and the fountain, the covered walk all round the court, and tricolor upon the main building. Mok-haznis armed with rifles were at the gate.

Some way from the gate a stoutish man sat beneath a palm, reading a newspaper. He turned out to be

an official I was not quite able to place, he was in the service of the big grocer at Agadir, whose Mohammed I had taken; but he lived at this military post, where he had a large office, acting apparently as chief civilian, commissioner for stores, forage, etc.—I could not investigate too closely his functions, but he messed and was to be classified with the non-commissioned Europeans in command of the Goums or native soldiery. He was not of commissioned status. He was a grocer and stores manager, I should say.

By this time it was noon and exceedingly hot. As a pith-helmet was the sign of a filibuster, I had noticed, and as I particularly desired to distinguish myself from the British filibusters and avoid being lumped with the Bulldog gold-diggers, I had no pith-helmet. My headdress was black—"Enemy" wide-awake, reminiscent of *Richmond Gem* packets. It sheltered me: but it was so hot at present that I hoped the European under the palm would come over to the gate and welcome me rather than I have to go to him to put forward the claims of a community of skin. Mohammed pointed him out as a fellow servant of the same Provision Merchant. At length I went along the road to where he sat and we had a civil chat under the palm.

He told me that the Berber Messiah would have to arise from the neighborhood of the river Massa, according to the local belief. But first we discussed my letter to the captain. The captain was expected at any moment. He had gone over to the souk, up the valley, two or three kilometers nearer to the "dissidence." It

was an important market, requiring his presence, for it was the first time the French had attempted to levy taxes in that market. No trouble was expected, but we never know. When he had first come out here, the tribesmen had always arrived armed at these markets, and he would never come to understand how it was that he had not long ago received a ball in his skin. Like most Vieux Marocains, he was not enthusiastic as to the chances of the French to hold what they had got, for longer than fate willed, if as long. His attitude was, I think, that he had sat long enough beneath that palm—he had the feeling that he was *getting on*—the bearded mercenaries leaning upon their guns spelled not stability for him, but a sort of well-paid interregnum. All that dark “dissidence” but just out-of-sight oppressed this typical, well-fed, English-looking paleface.

We hung about at the gate. Then the Beau Geste note was heavily struck—from farther down the road two figures approached us, one booted and spurred, handsome and aquiline, the other in military flannels, and at once the atmosphere of the most African military service was imported into the picture, and I slowly discerned how in *Beau Geste* the reality was subtly falsified. For it is *not* the Foreign Legion, that is perfectly evident, that is in any way romantic. Nothing is more matter-of-fact—they are ordinary German foot-regiments and no more picturesque than a war-time *poilu*. It is the “Goumier” who is the true Beau Geste; for nothing is more dashing and *film-fähig* than a squadron of Goums. And the white non-

coms are, in appearance, all that the most romantic nursery governess dreams of after going to a performance of a film about the Legion.

The principal non-com of Goums (as they are always called) was an Algerian, a Jew I should imagine, and so more than ever like the real thing of the militant screen. He was debonair to a degree, as gay as he was brave, and as full of wit as a rather operatic uniform imposes, to ballast it, as it were, if only with airy nothings—to disinfect the fanfaronade. He was an excellent boy, of possibly twenty-one, of student-age—oh, plucked from college to sit in a blockhouse facing the Djebel Kest. Yet Arabic he knew as well as French as he said, beaming with ambition: “*Etant si jeune, je suis pourtant un Vieux Marocain!*”—“Although so young, I am all the same an *Old Moroccan!*”

These non-coms of this native militia occupied blockhouses upon the line of the “dissidence,” some miles away up in the mountains. This post at Ait Baha was their headquarters. They relieved each other—I think every few days: it was the turn of Beau Geste to go up to the blockhouse now, after the siesta.

The *Goum* is an irregular soldiery. The Goums are more highly trained than the Mokhaznis, though the French military are of opinion that a really good Mokhazni takes a great deal of beating: and in fact, of course, all Berbers not only are naturally warlike but are so often engaged in war, from boyhood on, that a few months of discipline turns them into perfect soldiers (whereas it takes four years of very hard

work to make of the huge black lout from the Niger, for instance, a dependable *fantassin*).

Dependable, however, is not the word, it seems. For it is said that no Berber is ever *dependable*. After twenty years of service, he is still not dependable from the European standpoint. "Il faut faire attention," say the French—after however long a time! For they are unassimilable really. They are the *perfect soldier* certainly: but not quite in the European sense—never the perfect armed servant, or the automaton. So "Il faut toujours faire attention!"

Lady Dorothy Mills, in her book about Timbuctoo, says the French in the Soudan say the same thing regarding the Negro. "I have never personally come across dishonesty among the negroes," she says. "I have also found a good deal of loyalty. But then my experience has been comparatively superficial and very brief. Most white Africans will tell you that the negro has no abiding sense of loyalty or honesty; that after many years of seemingly both qualities he will let you down or rob you. And I suppose the white man who asserts this must have some sad and sound experience or reason for his assertion. Whether these regrettable lapses are the result of cold-blooded and deliberate depravity, or a sudden irresistible atavistic reversion to primitive instinct, I, of course, cannot say, but am inclined to believe it is the latter."

This is of course the *race problem*. A man can only be "loyal" to another man if he himself is very much of a *person*: this is rare, and still rarer must be the case where, given the necessary detached equipment,

any case at all for personal loyalty exists. (Is not the idea underlying the term "loyalty" used above that of the White Overlord? A Black Man *ought*—that is the idea—to sacrifice himself to a White. In practice of course he will do so just as long as he *must*, and for as long as it is convenient to do so.)

The differences between a French officer (say, from Alsace or Normandy) and an average *Ida ou Baqil*, or an *Ikounka*, tribesman, are too numerous and important for the alliance to be in any sense *personal*. For the other each is a representative of a race, not a person. The *inferior* of these two abstractions can be "depended upon" so long as the race of the superior abstraction has its hands firmly upon the controls, and so long as no personal difficulty occurs to ruffle the surface of the abstract relationship.

We stood at the gate for half an hour. I never minded the heat—even at the gates of the Sahara, in a late month. The airmen tell you that the danger-line for the heat starts at about Port Etienne, the Spanish post in Rio de Oro. There—it is very sudden, they say—you feel it; you are not conscious of the change, that makes it odd, but you fly into a passion on the slightest provocation. If it is your first visit, when suddenly you are observed to lose your temper and begin shaking your fist in the face of your best friend, the old hands will all laugh at you in chorus, and tell you that you must *always* in those parts wear your pith-helmet. It is a standing joke, it seems, that collapse of the sweetest temper, where the sun-line begins.

But it is very hot indeed in the Sous; and by twelve o'clock it is far more agreeable to go inside, certainly rather than to grill in a gateway. The non-coms invited me finally to step inside. This was a special occasion and the captain might be late—the souk was at an end and he should have returned. We went into the court of honor. A raised pavement led to a fountain in the center. As often as a mosquito attempts to breed (upon the water as they must) the fish snap up his eggs. We went out of the side of the court into an extensive garden. Bananas had recently been planted: for the most part it was a North African garden of large, scentless, bright, quickly-fading flowers. We walked across it, and there was a zoological garden, mainly composed of gazelles and mouflons. Beau Geste, most light-hearted of all renderings of French military life, offered his favorite gazelle, through the wire-netting, a cigarette, which it swallowed in a flash. Cigarette after cigarette vanished into its mouth; I gave it a packet, to show how much I appreciated tobacco-fed gazelles.

The captain's house stood in the middle of the garden. We returned to the principal, official court and examined the civilian's office, the door of which opened upon its arcaded walk. After that we went to the rear of the official residence, to the mess of the non-coms, and had rabbit and champagne, Burgundy and duck, port and bananas. With the most perfect hospitality these excellent fellows—six including the grocer, who was the only civilian—gave me a wonderful lunch, not at the expense of the French Govern-

ment, but out of their own pockets, since they pay for their own food, wine and coffee. A nicer lot I defy you to find—give me the Goums for hearty romance, it is a dud impresario, I must say that, who could neglect them for the Legion! Beau Geste shone, he gave a really magnificent display of devil-may-care real-thingness. The gramophone, in this large twilit mess where we were dug in from the sun, suggested the Western Front, and they had records even of the distant ditties that palpitated upon the air of the Menin Ridge or Chemin des Dames. We discussed everything from the Aïssaoua and Hamadsha to the black banners upon the mosques on Fridays. The annual feasts at Meknes, when the followers of Sidi Mohammed Ben Aïsa assemble from all over Barbary and tear living sheep to pieces with their teeth, also swallowing knives and forks, glass, screws, cactuses and so forth, is one of the big sights. Europeans are kept at a safe distance, on the roofs, because, when the Aïssaoua are at the summit of their frenzy, they are liable to fling themselves upon the White Man, and there are few Old Moroccans who have not some tale of being bitten. Beau Geste on this occasion insisted that if a European was going into the streets he must be careful to wear light-colored clothes. This is a fact—I have heard it often—no Jew can go out of doors at such seasons, it is more than his life is worth. But the Jew is recognized by his black costume. Hence *black* is to be avoided. Beau Geste insisted that a *black felt hat* would be quite enough—*black* in any form standing for *Jew*—it would be highly unsafe,

and the Aïssaoua foaming at the mouth, would rush you, and perhaps bite your nose off and swallow it raw. The civilian bore this out. A *black overcoat* was fatal. He had known a case! His friend (he gave the name) had lost a limb, through being mistaken for a Jew—he was in mourning at the time for his grandmother. Their rabbis keep all the Jews indoors. They eat everything in sight. Every year at the time of that feast several babies disappear. *Whose?* Why the newly-born children of the Aïssaoua women. *Is that possible?* Is that possible indeed! I should say it is, since every year it occurs! Possible! Why, they would eat anything! They eat their children every year—at least half a dozen or so disappear every year. *Is that so?* That is alas so! There is no way of stopping it. They think that is the right thing to do. No one has ever *seen* them eating their children: but every year at the same time a certain number disappear.

Beau Geste confirmed this. They were brutes—they ate their children. What more natural? When later on I asked a high authority if the Aïssaoua ate their children, he said, “Oh, not quite that!—not their children.” But they do eat animals—like lambs, pigs and chickens—alive. And as to the latter bird, they swallow a small one whole, with all its feathers. (Sparrows they will eat alive up to any quantity—they are particularly proud of not turning a hair at the *feathers*.)

As snake-charmers they do not of course confine themselves to “charming.” It has always been quite an everyday spectacle in Morocco to see a snake-

charmer—of the Brotherhood of Sidi Aïsa—bite off the head of a living cobra and swallow it, and follow this up by devouring the rest of the body, as a famished man might gollop up a liver-sausage.

I learned that the captain had returned, and so with very great regret said good-bye to these delightful people. Beau Geste was my pilot to the main building—he showed me the whitewashed target on the wall of a shed where their levies were taught to aim straight—not fire of course but hold the rifle. A Mok-hazni took me the rest of the way, round to the residence of the captain.

Captain La Croix, whom I now had the pleasure of meeting for the first time, is a particularly charming and intelligent French regimental officer. He is a dark, large-headed, active man, and as he came quickly into the room where I was waiting I was astonished at his costume—the belted smock, of light fawn-colored alpaca, reaching to his knees, his long black hair, and spurred top-boots, gave him the appearance of some contemporary of Tolstoi, gone moujik, yet exceedingly *soigné*—I recalled the accusations brought against Tolstoi that he dressed like a peasant but had his smocks made of the finest silk. He read the letter from the colonel, I explained my interest in the fortified communal stores of the Ikounka. Upon his table, and in his bookshelves, I noticed André Gide, *Revolt in the Desert*, *General Bramble*, several books of Robert Montagne's, and many more that confirmed the effect immediately produced by this unusual personality, namely that I was in the presence of a

person more capable than most of showing me all I needed to see; and, in the sequel, a delightful experience it proved to be, for all too short a time—in the company of this enlightened man, who spared no pains to show me over the most interesting parts of his domain—for he was for the moment the rajah of this part of the Atlas. As we came out into the garden before his residence we found “several” Chleuh gardeners at work: we met twenty men in file carrying pitchers of water—orderlies and sentries were on all hands, and the Kaiser himself could not have been surrounded with more homage than this French colonial captain, nor ever certainly have lived in so charming a palace even in the *Ægean*.

Preparations were required for a visit to the Ikounka fortresses it seemed—the sheiks had to be warned. We got into the car. I was to go for a tour of inspection with Captain La Croix, who had to pay a visit to an outlying post. Striking south, we were soon level with the walls of the Atlas. The inside mountains here rise to about 12,000 feet; they are very barren and sun-dried masses. We were to visit two kasbahs—the first was the Dar Lahaoussine. La Croix said he had the day before given the caïd permission to absent himself for a couple of days to go and get in his harvest, so he knew he was not at home. It was a very big castle indeed, upon the frontier of the “dissidence”—the mountains facing us were all “dissident.” It was here that the former sheik, a year or so ago, had caused a rising. When we walked up to the principal gate Captain La Croix had to thunder

upon it for some minutes before it was opened. We climbed all over it, except the women's quarters. The next castle, seven miles farther on, was a garrison. Cavalry from Tiznit (under the command of one European non-com at the moment) occupied it. There was a look-out man in one of the towers. In the course of our visit the garrison were summoned to their stations. This stream of tribesmen rushing past us through the courts of the castle was a film scene in fact—"the Attack on the Castle." I was drawing the stables at the time and did not see them take up their battle-positions. On the way back to Ait Baha we observed two armed horsemen approaching, one behind the other, with sweeping cloaks descending upon the backs of their horses. As we drew abreast of them the leading horseman saluted, his mount rearing, his cloak flying—a gallant picture of the romantic heyday, by Eugène Delacroix.—It was Beau Geste, with his Goum orderly, going up to his blockhouse in the High Mountains!

If I did not start back at once I should not reach Agadir in time, so I agreed to return the next day as early as possible and Captain La Croix was to take me to Assads, where there was a very fine communal fortress, the best in the district. He had invited me to stop the night, but for various reasons I thought I would go back, though I should have enjoyed extremely passing a night there. At the end of a couple of hours of hideous traveling, the sun set, and Mohammed stopped the car. He went to the side of the road and to my astonishment I next saw him kneeling in

the direction from which we had just come and prostrating himself. There was nothing hasty about his prayers. He may have thought that he was providing me with an "Islamic sensation." But all day he had been very subdued, not having at all expected, I think, such a warm welcome for me, upon the part of the military. He was an Agadirite after all—he had become infected, Berber though he was, and local man, with the scepticism of the filibusters. Then he had hoped to take me to an agadir or two. Now he was drawing attention to himself, I think—no one had taken much notice of him. (I knew I should have to pay another five francs for these prayers.) The chauffeur was not of high enough rank to pray, or in any case it was not necessary, and he had nothing to gain by it. We got in very late, but as the officers now used the Splendide-Astoria as a popotte, dinner was never over till well after ten.

CHAPTER IX.

VISIT TO A SHEIK OF THE ANTI-ATLAS

IN A better car next day I was at the gate at Ait Baha late certainly (Agadir would not make the way smooth to the difficult places, for author-trippers, who scorned the honest filibusters, and their straight-forward romance, and jolly flag-wagging under the noses of the Frogs—tourists unduly learned, for outsiders, about the leffs of the Anti-Atlas—the news spread among the chauffeurs that I was a friend of the French, and able to take care of myself: the car came late!)—but all the same we could get to Assads not much after the hour fixed, and I was delighted once more to be in the company of Captain La Croix, and to be able to pursue our conversation of the day before. I had found all he imparted to me of the greatest use. An intelligent man can tell you many things, of a certain order, that sometimes you may otherwise spend weeks in digging out of the halting lips of our average-sensual chum, Everyman.

We got at once into the car: a box full of carrier-pigeons was brought out by a Mokhazni and placed

beside the driver (this time a Spaniard). We returned through the territory of the Ikounka, then—instead of turning south towards Biougra, turned north, and followed the dir. It was a track, or piste, all the way. At last we reached the hills, of a paler, mere silvery sand, spotted with palmetto or cactus as usual. We passed two important palmeries. La Croix told me he had sent a Mokhazni over the mountains the night before on foot, to warn the sheik of our arrival, and tell him to expect us for lunch.

After another hour we turned in towards the mountains and began to go up out of the plain. We now entered a sandy valley full of palms. It was very fertile. The corn-gardens were rich and closely planted, we passed at some distance a very large souk, and next came in sight of a great village, whereupon we stopped. A small bearded elderly man, turbaned and dark, leaning upon a rifle, rose from the bank at the side of the lane. He got into the car and a little later I found he was the sheik, who had been waiting for us outside his village.

In the valley beneath us there was a stream, with plenty of water, and high date-palms crowded the bottom; upon either side of the stream, in terraces, the food-gardens were packed. The village opened with quite imposing (always fortified) houses. We ascended and upon our left and right chains of asses and mules were treading the corn upon large circular spaces, and beyond that was a large white castle. This was not the castle of the sheik, however, but of his

brother. Not above a few hundred yards beyond was a second castle. This was our destination.

An untidy ramp led up to the great gate, crowded with people. We got out, the sheik first: several tribesmen approached their chief, and kissed his hand, going half upon one knee as they did so, and afterwards carrying their fingers to their lips, as if to say *Hush!* and then retired, a pleased and dutiful look upon their faces.

Going into the castle, we were conducted through several passages and courts, and came out into a really cyclopean one, at the bottom of which were two large doors, horseshoe-arched, standing open. It was the guest refectory. Long and lofty, with the doors in the center, it had a European table and two chairs, in addition to the divans, and piles of cushions and rugs. The sheik had disappeared—it was his business to look over the dishes and see all was as it should be. His brother was much less negroid than our host (who was at least half black, woolly and thick-lipped, with a face that had its full melancholy share of the good-nature of the Negro—though he was a very quiet personage—mixed with a canny Berber owliness).

Several Negro slaves blocked the door, in idle composure. For a few moments we stood there talking, when our host returned. Captain La Croix and myself seated ourselves at the table and coffee was brought to us, which we drank alone. It tasted so strongly of mint that we drank very little, but the captain discussed with the sheik regional matters. The sheik did not understand French and they conversed in Arabic.

Then we removed from the table, and all sat down at the far end of the room. There was a divan against the wall, but the thing to do is to sit upon the floor and rest your arm upon the divan, above more rugs, which you drag into position. I crossed my legs, my favorite position. The sheik's trailed away lazily to the left.

A Berber manservant hurried in with a bowl of brass, and a brass coffee kettle: from the latter he poured water over our hands, and a second domestic offered us each a towel. The sheik cleaned his teeth with his wet forefinger. I followed suit.

Tea was brought in, that dreadful hot green syrup, drenched in mint. You are supposed to drink three glasses. Then came a big bowl full of hard-boiled eggs. They are all small eggs, for the chickens, like the goats, are small in Barbary, and the thin layer of white is stained an inky blue from the encroachment of the yolk. All hard-boiled Soussi eggs have a putrid taste. Is it the feeding of the chickens? That must be it, but I cannot tell you, as I forgot to ask someone not interested in their sale why all eggs were thus. A large bowl of peeled almonds was brought in. I ate a great many of these delicious nuts—whenever the sheik looked up I took a handful of nuts. Honey cakes followed. They were damp and intensely sticky buns, I bit one and left it: but immediately afterwards large bulbous griddle cakes were brought in, punctured all over with air holes. All this food was placed in a small circular table—in because from above it resembled an upturned sieve—it was upon

stout legs perhaps six inches high. (The almonds were in bowls upon the floor, also the hard-boiled eggs.)

With the griddle cakes were three small bowls: one contained pure butter; one pure honey; one butter, honey and argan oil mixed. You dipped the griddle-cake in whichever of these three sauces you preferred. But the Atlas honey is supposed not to be very satisfactory owing to the habits of the bee, who feeds upon the flowers of the huge cactus called *figue de Barbarie*. On the other hand, argan oil no European will eat if he can help it. (For many purposes the *arganier* is a more valuable tree than the olive: but its taste for the European palate is so horrible, that it is difficult to market its produce in Europe.) The butter is very peculiar, but better than either the honey or the oil. So I dipped my griddle cake in the butter.

Next came the couscous. This is the national Berber dish. Resolved at all costs not to be too "damned conservative," I put my fingers into the couscous and ate some. Couscous may take almost any form, so long as it has a *base* of, not semolina, but *semoule*. This was a sticky rice-like paste, with the flavor of argan oil and rank goat's butter. After the couscous came a bundle of skewers, upon which were stuck black pellets of alternate liver and fat. We sat round this miniature table, the sheik and myself upon one side, Captain La Croix upon the other, and luckily the sheik who had been told I expect that I was a notable white *taleb*, speaking neither Chleuh nor Arabic, allowed me to eat as I wished, and discussed

matters of moment with his master. A dish full of the bodies of about a dozen small chickens, plastered with poached eggs, then was brought in, and the sheik tore a leg off, offering it a little slyly to me. He himself put his forefinger into the inside of the bird under the breast bone, and prized it up: he picked the breast clean, and we dropped the bones into the receptacle that served as table—what I have compared to a sieve but upon legs.

Next came a mass of fragments of mutton and lamb mixed. Noticing that I was turning over the pieces with my thumb, the sheik smiled encouragingly and plunging his hand in up to the wrist, as if it had been a lucky dip, groped about inside and then pulled out a little hard lump of mutton, a tit-bit his practiced fingers had been able to fish out by themselves. This he offered to me with a nice smile, faintly insisting that it was a good morsel. I thanked him and bit all round it. I knew from all accounts and all precedent that this tired, black-blooded, sympathetic, almost timid elder had shot and poisoned a quantity of people in order to have more and still more of such good things of Berber life as we were now called upon to sample. This was the Fat of the Land. From a village notable like another he had assumed the title of amghar and fortified his house so heavily that soon it assumed the aspects of a fortress and he had egged on his brother to do the same lower down the valley. Then he had made war upon neighboring villages and next seized power in the canton. That is how you become sheik, and that is how probably he had

done it. His last step would be to ruin the agadir or democratic fortress-store of the little republic of which he had become the tyrant. Why he had not done this I did not like to ask.

But there are alternatives to this way of becoming sheik. He may, for instance, have been the Sheik of the Makhzen—the chief chosen by the central Arab Government to represent the canton.—A tribe is composed of a conglomeration of what are called *ikhs*. An *ikhs* is a patriarchal (agnatic) family, composed of the descendants of a common ancestor, with whom are incorporated strangers who have married into the *ikhs*.

In any tribe of the Anti-Atlas, made up of a greater or lesser number of *ikhs*, or patriarchal groups, usually the members of the *ikhs* which has been there longest (in fact at the foundation of the tribe) are the most influential. In so far as one can speak of aristocracy in such a case, these members of the Founders' Family constitute the "nobles," and their leaders or elders have most say in the deliberations of the council of the tribe.

But if the Sultan, or the "Makhzen"—the Cherifian Government—are appointing a sheik, they invariably choose him from amongst one of the "oldest families"—one of the families that is of the original founders of the tribal unit. And of course the Sheik of Assads may have reached his present eminence in that way, though even then a rare amount of intrigue and a good deal of arsenic must accompany the emergence

of such a tyrannical personal power as that possessed in the present case.

The sheik now produced his long reed pipe with a small clay bowl—they look like very rakish cigarette-holders—for kiff-smoking. Kiff is usually hemp and tobacco mixed. He had a very quiet smoke so that there was a dreamy interval while the tea was brought in: this his brother, the other sheik, prepared, over by the door. We each got a glass, and then began all over this large empty feudal apartment a sound of long-drawn-out relishing and lip-smacking: the brother, from over by the door, had a noisy deep-drawn sip: the sheik at my side responded: Captain La Croix gave a good deep *aah!* of appreciation, and other drinkers at the other end of the apartment joined in—the effect was of contrapuntal Amens: so we went on for a few minutes in complete silence, until the first glass was finished. Then the sheik filled another pipe. When the third cup of tea had been drained by the sheik and captain, an attendant came in bearing a large barber's squirt and rapidly approaching the latter deluged his face hair and body with rose-water. He did the same with the sheik and myself. Meanwhile a brazier had been brought over and placed beside our host: this he poked up a little, blew upon it, threw upon the coals some fragments of what I suppose was gum-benjamin or aloes, and a delicious smoke was produced, which the sheik as far as possible caught in his clothes, and invited me to do the same. I opened my jacket, and buttoned it up upon as much of the incense as possible.

This terminated the meal, and Captain La Croix indicated to the sheik that as we had not a great deal of time we had better start for the fortress overhead. (The agadir could be seen from the courtyard outside the room in which we were eating, immediately above us, and from the agadir you could look down into the castle.) So we all left the guest hall, the luncheon over.

CHAPTER X.

THE AGADIR AT ASSADS

IN THE huge cavern of the entrance, the sun blasting down outside so that we all stood in an opaque shadow, which ended abruptly, were gathered the two sheiks, slaves, Captain La Croix, his Mokhazni tribesmen. Out of the huge tunnel that led to the stables was brought a large white horse, with the swagger saddle of Barbary, high-peaked, and, Graham tells us, a torture to the civilized horseman, and Captain La Croix leapt upon this dazzling steed and moved out into the sunlight. An enormous mule followed upon the heels of the white charger, and that was for me: then came a sensible little ass for the wise old sheik and a mule of far more reasonable dimensions for his brother. I attempted to get hold of the donkey: but laughing with much respectful mischief the sheik pushed me out of the way and got on himself. I had to have the giant mule. With palm-fans in our hands, and attendants on foot to push us up if the mules stuck, we started, passed once more the fraternal castle (watched no doubt by a hundred Fatmahs from the lattices and portcullises) and entered a wilderness

of rocks and argan trees. Above our heads, upon the summit of a steep hill, was the famous agadir, which the colonel from whom I had received my permit had assured me was the finest in the whole of the Anti-Atlas.

It took us half an hour to reach the top: it was an exceedingly steep, winding ascent, far too steep for anything but a donkey. La Croix was obliged no doubt to go up upon a charger for administrative reasons, but it must have been uncomfortable.

The hill was high, sharply pointed, and very neatly turned by nature, at least as observed from a distance—it could have been flattened into a big pyramid easily, except that, at the back, it grew into mountains behind it. Its tip, its small horns, were the round towers of its citadel: and the walls of this citadel were softly rounded too, and continued down the side a little way, merging into the body of its rocky spit. It was like a neatly cut tip to the hill, smoothed round and roughly polished—the perpendicular ferrule, say, of a steep parasol. And the very topmost of the hill was the flat roofs of the towers and buildings. From this little platform you could look down plumb into the interior of the castle of the Sheik No. 1 (observing all the goings and comings of its occupants) and also a great panorama of the *azaghar*, the plain of the Sous, was inclined for your inspection like a rich saffron carpet, to the northwest.

We all passed under a large thick-gated arch, beside which was the entrance to a tower. We were then inside the outer shell of the fortress. The rocky track

continued inside this arch, still no better than the bed of a torrent, and led to the main entrance of the inner fort.

Throughout the ramparts were exceedingly solid, built of stone and concrete. Beneath the winding archway of the main entrance the ground still mounted, a few stone steps added at the top. There you reached a small court, with a tower at one side: it was a well, surrounded by the high circular battlements, and this was the porter's quarters. The porter and his family live in the agadir. He has the right to use the cistern of the fortress to water his animals. He is called the *amin*.

Upon this occasion the sheik asked the porter if he wasn't too old to continue in his duties (to which the veteran replied with an emphatic negative and some hearty remark that made them all laugh good-naturedly) and I gathered he had occupied the position for some time, though apparently they are as a rule engaged by the year. I asked the chief how long the agadir had been built. A consultation ensued between himself, his brother and the porter. Captain La Croix said a dispute had taken place, they were unable to decide, but that all were agreed it had been built "in the year of the great wind."

It seems the Berber of the Atlas has little idea of time, and relies mainly upon such methods of computation as the above. The reader may recall the story in the Arabian Nights in which a wanderer returns to his native city and, as he enters it, feels so

elated to be home once more that he addresses a poor woman and her child who were resting just inside the gate. "What a delightful child!" he exclaims. "How old is he, madam?" The woman replies, "He was born, sir, in the year of the great Fart." (This was the year in which the traveler had himself left the city. And it may be recalled the reply depressed him considerably owing to the fact that it was he, as it happened, who had been responsible for this particular historical milestone.)—No Berber knows, it seems, how old he is, except in relation to other people, and even then they are apt in the end to forget who came upon the scene first.

From this sunk court—which is very intricately built, and the details of which could only be explained by the use of a plan—you enter the main court (which is a short street) of the agadir. This is a mass of deep lock-up shops, three stories high. There are not above a hundred chambers all told in the agadir of Assads: some of the largest agadirs, or ighrems, of the Anti-Atlas, contain as many as two or three hundred. But the Assads Shop is one of the best built and is in perfect preservation.

Perhaps the most striking, externally, about this strange shuttered street are the enormous rough-hewn wedges of stone which protrude everywhere, thrust into the face of the masonry beside the doors or above the lintels, to serve as steps, up and down the fronts of the buildings of this concentrated village-street. The chambers are narrow and deep, the en-

trance six feet high, but in width not above four feet, penetrating to a depth of perhaps as much as fifteen feet. In the doors a small hole is cut sometimes, large enough to admit a cat. Mice are attracted by the grain, and in all the *magasins-collectifs* cats are used to keep the mice in check.

As regards the best position, from the standpoint of the tribesman, the middle chambers are preferred: the lowest of all are apt to be damp, being next to the ground, the uppermost are apt to suffer from leaking roofs, and the occupant of a top chamber is compelled to keep the roof in repair. One of the forms of theft most carefully provided against is that effected by making a small hole in the ceiling of a chamber and so causing the grain in the room overhead to pour down into your own. On the other hand, should rodents make holes in the wall, it is the duty of the occupier to repair them. Lastly any door can be pulled down that is proved not to be rat-proof.

Every possible misdemeanor is provided for, and in some cases the fines imposed are rather curious. Here, for instance, is one of many such provisions, taken, in this case, from the Code of the Fortress of the Beni Bahman, but the laws governing the supervision of these shops are much the same throughout the Anti-Atlas:

He who fornicates with a she-ass inside the agadir, in view of the porter, or in view of any other witness (in whose testimony reliance may

be placed) will pay a fine of 2 *dirkem* to the Oumanas, and 3 *sa'as* of corn to the She-ass.

(It is interesting to note that the above crime is punishable with death according to the Koranic, the Arab, code. Often there is, between the Berber and Arab view of the same matter—as the respective punishments in the above instance give proof of—a critical difference.)

Leading out of this main court which is also a village-street, is a narrow passage, two flights of steps, and then a subterranean passage or tunnel with shops on either side. Passing along this burrow in a crouching position, you cannot stand upright, you issue out, at the further end, upon the top of the outer ramparts.

Access to the roofs is gained by means of the trunks of trees, into which steps have been cut, which serve as ladders. Captain La Croix released the carrier-pigeons from the inner gateway, with a message for Ait Baha: they went down into the valley and then rose, disappearing over the crest of the mountain that lay south of us.—After more green tea, however, in the gateway of the agadir, we started back for the castle below, and after a little more conversation with the sheik, we left Assads—the two sheiks and their followers lying upon the shoulders and necks of their horses or asses, in those attitudes which betoken more than virtuosity as horsemen—that treating the animal as an armchair, or better, as a convenient farmyard gate to lean upon—which, in fact, denotes an absolute

solidarity with the animal. The last view we had of them was of this mounted group in the open space in front of the first of the two castles lying about upon their mounts as they politely waited for our car to disappear, or wheeling in a lightning right-about, to disappear with the abruptness of a djinn, flashing behind a cactus-wall.

CHAPTER XI.

“THE SOUS”

*(Distant and Mysterious, Home of the Mahdis
and Pretenders)*

THE “Sous” is referred to by Dr. Montagne as “the distant and mysterious” Sous—“the home of the Mahdis and of the Pretenders, of the religious reformers and of the Taleb magicians”; and it is the country of origin of all the snake-charmers—the “Soussi” are the poets of Morocco—its acrobats have been signaled in Chicago and all the great cities of the West: then the Chleuh and especially “Soussi” is said to be of all Moroccans the one with the best business head. But above all the “Sous” is the great messianic territory selected by prophecy as the birth-place of that ultimate Man of the Hour—the Deliverer that is to come.

“The Sous” is unfortunately a rather loose term; it suggests sometimes a very extensive territory indeed, sometimes a quite small one. A map of some sort is of course essential, if you are to follow even a short discussion of what shall be intended by “Sous.” Assuming that the reader has an idea of the main features of the geography of Morocco, I will define,

before going any further, what is most generally understood by "the Sous."

The administrative district of the Sous, under the "Makhzen," comprises much more than the mere valley of the Oued Sous. When you are speaking of "the Sous" you can, and people often do, understand only the Plain of Taroudant and the neighborhood of the river in its lower course. But the more general significance of the term is all those purely Berber and Chleuh-speaking mountain territories reaching from Telouet, the Glaoua headquarters, in the High Atlas, as far as to the Atlantic, and from Marrakech to the Oued Noun. This is the region in which the dialect termed "Tachelhait" is spoken.

The reasons that have caused the central power of the Makhzen—that is to say, the Arab sultans at Fez—to settle the limits of this administrative territory in this way can be brought under two or three heads. First, the territories in question were roughly the south portion of the Cherifian Empire. A line from Demnat to Mogador—that of the northern *contre-forts* of the High Atlas—would give the frontier of this great division of South and North. Secondly, "the Sous," as understood in this way, conveniently establishes the limits of the main mass of the independent, never properly reduced and subjugated, part of the Berber world. The Chich (that is more or less definitely Arab or else Arabized) tribes in the Marrakech Plain serve to limit this purely Berber world upon the north: the Arabized Saharans limit it upon the south. The line of oases or "palm-gardens," of the

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

Dadés and Upper Draa in the south is conventionally the southern limit of Barbary proper: though in fact the nomads beyond are much more Berber than anything else, however much superficially Arabized and Islamized they may be, or so almost all the authorities upon the Sahara tell us.

When, however, in a café conversation a filibuster, or an airman, refers to "the Sous," in a loose way, he does not mean anything so inclusive as the Demnat-Mogador, Telouet-Agadir territory. He simply means the Valley of the Sous and as much to the south of the Oued Sous as would take you to the desert, fifty kilometers inside which Tiznit stands. (In the map you will see at once where Tiznit stands—there is nothing near it.)

But Tiznit, and Ifni (the "Santa Cruz de Mar Pequeña" of the Spaniard) on the coast, are in what is usually called "The Spanish Sahara." And the airmen (and usually also the filibusters, who take their cue from the airmen) call everything indiscriminately "Rio de Oro" that is south of the Sous, and north of Podor, in Senegal.—Having settled these points of popular, as opposed to technical, nomenclature, you will be prepared for what I next have to write about—namely one of the most intensely mysterious countries in the world, "Rio de Oro."

Tiznit is 100 kilometers south of Agadir, in what is called the Spanish Sahara: and already halfway to Tiznit the desert begins. The walled oasis city of Tiznit stands in the commencement of a desert that is continuous (as steppe, mountain, or erg) as far as

the river Senegal. Tiznit is the *clou* to this geography. You may take Tiznit as a limit.

This desert that begins just south of the Oued Sous is several times the size of Morocco. It has never been properly penetrated or explored by Europeans. It is inhabited by what are certainly among the most savage people on earth—the Mauretanian nomads. And a big section of it is occupied by what is technically (and strictly on the map) a Spanish possession, called the Rio de Oro.

The Rio de Oro proper is an absolute desert. It is sand and steppe, nothing but that: 500 kilometers north to south, by 300 kilometers west to east, roughly.

It is an almost complete terra incognita, as are the other deserts in which it merges on all sides. Gautier, one of the great French experts on the Sahara, says of it, "There is not, in all the Sahara—the Libyan Desert included—a section about which less is known than the Rio de Oro."

Upon this desert coast the English established themselves in a place called Cap Juby. They were driven out (without regret, I should imagine). The Spaniards now have a fort or kasbah there, which is also (or was until recently) a penal colony. Besides that (and this is the most important thing about it) it is a station of the French Aeropostale Service.

All that we know of the Rio de Oro has been learnt from the aviators of the Aeropostale Service. And occasional Spanish airmen who have ventured down there have the same story to tell. While I was in Morocco the Rio de Oro was always in the news. The follow-

ing typical report appeared for instance in the Casablanca press at the end of July:

DES INDIGÈNES DU RIO DE ORO TIRENT SUR UN
AVION ESPAGNOL

Las Palmas 22 Juillet.—Un avion qui inaugurerait le service aerian entre la Peninsule et Las Palmas, aux Canaries, ayant été contraint, en raison du brouillard, de survoler, à faible altitude, la zone insoumise entre Agadir et le Cap Juby, a été attaquée par des indigènes qui ont tiré plusieurs coups des fusil contre l'appareil, dont une vitre a été brisé par une balle qui n'a heureusement atteint aucun des occupants.

L'avion a pu poursuivre sa route et atterrir au Cap Juby, ou le pilote a fait son rapport au commandant de la garnison.

This is a thing of weekly occurrence. Airmen (French or Spanish) who for one reason or another get too low, are fired on, that is invariable: if they are forced to land, they are either killed or held to ransom. There is no exception to that rule.

Airmen who have landed in the Rio de Oro and have come back to tell the tale (and usually an airman is not killed, because the ransom for a good airman is substantial) always remark how, descending in a completely empty desert, within ten minutes or so "les Maures" or "los Moros" are there before them—there is a sudden dust and there are the wild horse-

men, their rifles pointing at the intruder—or they come up on foot, as it were out of the ground.

One French airman who was held a prisoner for some weeks came back with his nails worn to the quick, where he had been forced to dig and scrape in the rocky soil with his bare hands—when, the night arrived, his nomads camped—to make the hole for their camp-fire, to boil their tea. He suffered greatly from hunger and thirst—he got hardly anything to eat or drink; and until his release he was treated as an ordinary slave of the band who had taken him. The largeness of the ransom expected does not much modify the treatment of their prisoners by these particular bandits.

CHAPTER XII.

THE "BLUE MEN" OF THE RIO DE ORO

AN AEROPOSTALE pilot, stationed for a long time at the air-station at Cap Juby, was, I found, an inexhaustible store of information regarding the Mauretanians. They are the famous "Blue People," or Blue Men (*les Hommes Bleu*) whose "Blue" trail lies all over the history of Maghreb. The airman said that numbers of them come up to the Spanish fort to trade, or to receive presents. The Spaniards (who are extremely afraid of them) give them presents even if they bring nothing with them to sell, which they accept fiercely as a tribute, without thanks, or with loud curses if they do not think much of what they have been given. They allow the Spaniards to remain there—they are on sufferance: the Moors remark contemptuously that the Spaniards do not give them any trouble. My French informant told me that not only do the Spaniards give their Mauretanian "subjects" no trouble, but are so terrified of them that the officers will not move more than a few yards outside their fort, from year's end to year's end.

It is incredible, according to his view of the matter, how abjectly they are the prisoners, in this small and mournful fortress, of the nomads outside its walls.

If you go outside the walls (as the braver of the inhabitants of this strange capital of empire do from time to time, to stretch their legs) there are certain rules that have to be observed. One of the most striking is to do with what the German *Korps Student* would call "fixing." You must not under any circumstances "fix" a Mauretanian "Blue Man." It is quite essential to remember that for these most fanatical of all Mussulmans, your glance is a serious defilement. Also, no doubt, if you come out of the fort you are identified with the strange terror-stricken garrison within. Anything that could be even remotely interpreted as taking a liberty (an insolent *sans-*façon** on the part of the member of a community only tolerated on the condition that they adhere to this dishonorable seclusion) must at all costs be avoided. But should they find you looking at their faces, much more should you seem to *stare* at them, that is quite fatal: immediately the muzzles of all their rifles rise, focused menacingly upon the offending person—to teach manners, at least, to the unclean one who has ventured to poke his nose outside his prison. At their feet you may look. Out of sheer contempt, that is allowed. Your head bowed, therefore, you may slink outside the ramparts of the fort, while a downcast eye, fixed upon the exceedingly filthy blue feet belonging to these lords of the desert, will not attract a bullet. But even then it is only a bastard "Maure," the dregs of Mauretania,

who ever comes near the fort. What a situation, seeing the legendary Spanish pride—and what an odd *reductio ad absurdum* of the arrogant European idea of a Conquering White Race! The fort at Cap Juby might almost be maintained there by the unsuccessful Spanish in order to revenge themselves upon the rest of “progressive” Europe, by disgracing as it were the still active White Empires. “You will *all* sooner or later come to this!” the Spaniard, it may be, sardonically is saying! Such at least is the picture that all bring back from a visit to this peculiar colony of Spain’s.

In 1850 the first and last European to cross Mauretania died (from wounds and exposure) at Mogador. It is the only territory of any dimension in the world where, definitely, it is quite impossible for the White Man to go. No Paleface can walk into it and walk out again, without paying a crushing ransom, becoming a slave, or being killed.

The cause of all this is not, however, the feebleness of European arms. It is a result merely of the competitive susceptibility of European nationalism. Rio de Oro could be wiped up in six months or less by the French, without any trouble whatever. But Rio de Oro is “Spanish.” If the French invaded Mauretania, the nomads they were driving before them would all pass over the imaginary frontier line of this desert-colony of Spain’s. “International complications” would immediately supervene. It is, in an even more aggravated form, the same sort of difficulty with which France is confronted at Agadir.

Some years ago the Spanish Government was on the

point of ceding Rio de Oro to France. Then suddenly the French Aeropostale Service was established. From Toulouse to Dakar this service is bound to pass over the Occidental Sahara—the “Spanish Sahara” as it is called: and the only intermediate halfway stop between Casa and Dakar is Cap Juby. The Rio de Oro has to be *survolé*—there is no alternative. But thereupon a new situation arose. The Rio de Oro, as an aeroplane route, acquired a value that it had not possessed as a mere desert, one evidently irreclaimable by man. The Spaniards, just on the point of parting with the Rio de Oro for a song, jacked up their price, and stood out for a sum that seemed to the French negotiators exorbitant. They broke off the negotiations. There the matter has remained ever since.—Yet for the perfecting of this extraordinary French colonial empire the Rio de Oro is of critical importance. And the non-possession of it by France may one day—who can say?—be in the nature of a military disaster.

Under these circumstances—and this is a fact of contemporary history, or geography, of which the majority of people are quite ignorant, I find—a vast territory, nearly the whole of the Occidental Sahara (north to south, from Tiznit to Podor—west to east, from Cap Juby to the Saoura) is an impenetrable blank: it is a No Man’s Land: and actually Hardy and Gautier, in their recent books, which set out to bring the topography of the Sahara up-to-date, have to leave huge question marks upon their maps.

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

Before the French occupation of the Sahara, the "Berabers" of Tafilalelt were the recognized masters of the oases of the Palm-road across the desert to Timbuctoo. The Berabers have been more or less driven off these routes: but they have retired into the regions west of the Saoura—the regions, namely, that we are talking about, the most general name for which is Mauretania.

Under the heading "La Mauretanie," Gautier writes as follows:

The extreme Occidental Sahara to the west of the Niger and of the Saoura is an immense country, about which there is very little to say. . . . Thanks to the explorations (already far off) of Lenz and of Foucauld, thanks to *randonnées* on the part of the Méharists, one has a sort of idea of its general armature: the Eglab *massif*, bombilation of the peniplane, with its ceinture of elongated *ergs*. In the south, upon the borders of the Soudan, we have information regarding the Mauretanian Odrar—a red-terraced plateau, devonian or silurian, very like the Touareg plateau of Tassili, of Moudir, or of the Ahnet. But the interesting part (of Mauretania) from the human standpoint is precisely that that is least known. (*Le Sahara.*)

It is surprising to learn again that no geographer is on firm ground at all in dealing with what would seem

so accessible as the Saharan edge of the High Atlas. And it is even more puzzling when we are told that all the information we possess regarding this region dates mainly from what explorers of forty or fifty years ago have left us. I will, however, continue my quotation from Gautier.

At the southern border of the High Atlas, on the Moroccan (or western) side, we can only barely guess the nature and position of the great oases. That of Tafilalet is certainly a little universe to itself: its ancient capital, Sidgilmessa, played a great rôle in the Berber Middle Ages. But the only information we have upon Tafilalet is that of explorers who passed through it rapidly, often having to conceal themselves (Rohlf, de Foucauld, Harris). In the opinion of de Foucauld—without whom the greater part of the Sahara at the foot of the Moroccan Atlas would still be a blank upon our maps—the oases of the Draa are the finest of all the Algerian Sahara. But that is about all we know.

To come upon this kind of geographical *blank*, or semi-blank, only a relatively short distance from places that anyone, with the necessary permission, can with perfect security visit, demonstrates the difficulty of the task with which the French have been confronted. Also, I think, it does tend to justify the cautious and “indirect” (political, rather than military) approach

of Lyautey. Another thing that I think is suggested by these facts is how precarious European control in fact is. The Great Caïds of the Atlas play somewhat the same rôle as the Princes in India. For a French Imperialist, like Lyautey, the High Atlas was seen in terms of the Great Caïds of the Atlas, because the risks and difficulties were to him but too apparent. And if you are going to be an Imperialist, whatever we may think of the sort of intelligence that goes with Imperialism, it is better to be an efficient one than the reverse.

But Gautier quite correctly says that the most interesting of these *blanks* is that to be found in the part of this territory nearest the Atlantic: and once more in this connection, Atlantis appears upon the scene: for, if the Rio de Oro ever submits to European penetration, it is more than likely that the whole Atlantis problem, resulting from the troublesome passages in the *Critias*, will again be forced upon the scientific world.

It is above all upon the Atlantic Coast where problems of high importance await a solution. There is one such problem, a matter of physical geography, that is of world-importance: namely the question of *Atlantis*. The text of Plato is very vague: but geologists and zoologists admit that recently there has been a continental sinkage in the ocean-bottom. Upon this question it is possible that a detailed study of the coast will bring

to light most interesting confirmatory facts. (*Le Sahara*, p. 217.)

What Mauretania means for the man-in-the-street—the European colonial, the Vieux Marocain—is simply a country where any European entering is immediately caught, slaughtered or ransomed. It is a sensational frontier for Morocco to have, all said and done, at its southern extremity. The deserters from the Foreign Legion always escape into Mauretania: they are immediately caught, and the nomads, that is a recognized thing, get fifty francs for a legionary. It is not much. But it is just worth “touching.” So they bring him in. But they have not always the time to spare, and then it is said they kill him. None of these people are ever seen again: some may be held as slaves—they are usually good strong German peasants. (As a rule the Arab or Berber has valued the Negro much higher than the European, as a slave. In the market Cervantes would fetch far less than Uncle Tom.)

There is a good café story, told by the airmen of the Rio de Oro, of one particular legionary caught by the Mauretanian nomads, and who subsequently, as a slave, had an unusual destiny. This fine fellow had had enough of it, he deserted, he hurried over into the Rio de Oro. Immediately he was sighted and caught by nomads. They looked him over. They went through his pockets, and there they found a photograph. Before the war, it seems, this strapping German had been a private in the Prussian Life

Guards. In the photograph he occupied a highly-favorable foreground position. He had on a magnificent helmet with eagles sticking out of the top of it. He dwarfed all the other persons in the photograph. Clearly, he was the most important person there. Clearly, he was no ordinary man. This was a most important capture!

His captors had a consultation. They came to the conclusion that they had captured no less a person than the Emperor of Germany. This in their opinion being the case, they put the photograph away in a safe place, gave the ex-legionary a severe beating, and put him down the well again, with a piece of bread and a date or two. This they repeated during a period of two weeks. Then, to his intense relief, they stopped, and did not put him down the well any more.

The reason for their behaving in this unpleasant way was that, believing him to be the Emperor of Germany, they were afraid of his escaping. In consequence they thought it best to break him in at once. Their reasoning was that he would be so relieved at being no longer flogged and put down the well, that he would, when comparing it with what he had suffered, be quite reconciled with his lot.

They began traveling round: and wherever they went they showed other nomads (such as they regarded as safe and not likely to steal or take him by force) their valuable booty. They would show the photograph and him together. And it was universally agreed that it was indeed the German Emperor, and they were very much envied for the possession of

such an unusual European. They would still occasionally put him down a dry well when one was handy, to be on the safe side.

At last, after some weeks, they parted with him for a very substantial sum. The nomads who had bought him started restlessly off, and again for some weeks he was tramping the steppes at the heels of his wild masters. Then they reached a ksar, and he was sold once more—this time for much more money. When he changed hands, he was always *sold with his photograph*. So he went on changing hands, as people got to hear of him, and fresh, most tempting offers came in all the time. His price soared and soared, until at last a tribe nearly bankrupted itself in buying him, and he became its most valuable possession—a sort of Koh-i-Noor, worth all their camels and horses rolled into one. Then they sent him down, under a heavy escort, to the coast at Cap Juby, to realize on him. The idea was to enter into negotiations for his sale with the German Government, or otherwise to get in touch with a millionaire amateur, likely to wish to acquire a German Emperor.—When they showed his photograph to the Europeans, however, they were received with shouts of laughter, of course: and they nearly shot one or two of them in their indignation. They could, however, get no offers, and at last came down from the sum fixed—fifteen thousand pounds sterling—a thousand or two. They were convinced these Nazarenes were bluffing them. So they sat down and waited.—But this part of my good café story goes on for a long time: it is enough to say that at last, nerv-

ous and shaken in the belief as to the value of their capture, the Moors got down as low as a thousand pounds—by this time loathing the sight of this honest German face. And the end of the story is that, convinced of their terrible mistake at last, they sell him for forty francs to a good-natured airman, and take their departure, only saved by those words of sovereign efficacy "*It was written!*" from blowing their brains out where they stood.—This is a typical aeropostale yarn of the Rio de Oro. And in the Sous, amongst the Legion or amongst the filibusters and mongrel pioneers, or the Vieux Marocains, hundreds of such tales circulate. You meet here a pilot who was surrounded by nomads when his machine came down, or there a legionary will turn up who shows you a letter from Germany from a comrade who claims to have got through by the good offices of a homosexual sheik. There are many tall stories. But in the South of Morocco the words "Rio de Oro" brighten up any company. All the tongues start wagging together—this vast No Man's Land is like a dark, always stormy, uncrossed ocean, whose sinister sand billows lash the south of the Sous, and whose neighborhood breeds numberless stories of adventure.

Since my return from Morocco I have not met a single person who had ever heard of the Rio de Oro. Say "Rio de Oro" anywhere in England—except perhaps within the doors of the Royal Geographical Society, or it may be the Foreign Office—and those monosyllables pregnant with adventure will fall upon uncomprehending ears. "Rio de Oro?" the person to

whom you say it will repeat. *Rio de* what? For everybody it is a *great blank*, just as it is a great blank for the cartographer. But he at least can tell you where it ends, and what is its latitude, and how it stands as regards the meridian of Greenwich. No one else—outside of Africa, or the Aeropostale Service—has ever heard of it.

Yet there are only two places in the world today where no moneyed, legged globe-trotter (prancing forward with pistols and puggaree determined to write a book) is refused admittance by the inhabitants. Tibet is a mere tourist center. The Borneo headhunter would not hunt the head of a horse-fly if you paid him. All the Pacific and Patagonian cannibals have become vegetarians. There are only *two* forbidden lands. One is in equatorial or sub-tropical South America. The other is the Rio de Oro.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SAND-WIND OF THE COAST OF ATLANTIS

THE Rio de Oro would be nothing to us but a big resonant meaningless name—the label for an enormous nothingness, which, whatever else may be there, contains neither the waters of a river, nor the glint of gold (the parched fringe of it is dangerous, like something incandescent, dangerous to touch, but only *a frontier*) if it were not for the airmen. It is because it lies beneath the air route of this most romantic of all services that we hear so much constantly about it. It is never off the lips of the airmen; between Toulouse and Patagonia, it is the sector of their flying route most beset with dangers: It is not only the nomads underneath, always waiting to catch them, but the violences of its atmosphere. The latter matches its human representatives. The red sand-wind of the desert is a fitting elemental mate up above for the savage wanderers that infest it down below. It is one and all these things that make up this dark entity, with its big rolling name—Rio de Oro.

For the first time in the earth's history we have to

take into count a new territory—the upper atmosphere: when we speak of an ocean or of a desert, we have quite probably to think also of that other waste above it. Formerly, in speaking of a great plain, we were apt to have to refer to the mountains that enclosed or ended it: and in speaking of the people who dwelled upon it, it would be our business also to refer to the people of the mountain—the one without the other, that would be an incomplete picture.

But now, higher even than the mountains, we have to take into our conspectus that new, very solitary, not by any means numerous, people, who for all practical purposes live in those superior altitudes. So when we are speaking of the nomads of the Rio de Oro, the fact that there are *other* nomads higher up cannot be ignored. Indeed if they were forgotten, they would at every moment make themselves felt, and disturb the symmetries of the scene, recorded however ably. De Saint Exupéry has expressed this *air-status*, as it may be called, with great effectiveness—in his extraordinary book, *Vol de Nuit*. I will quote the passage where I think he has done this for us: the city to which reference is made beneath is a South American city, however.

Three pilots . . . hidden by the night, meditated their flight (*medités leur vol*) and, towards the immense city, would slowly descend from their stormy, or peaceful, sky, *like strange peasants come down out of their mountains*.

These "strange peasants," this novel race of the upper airs, cannot be left out. But to eliminate them from the Rio de Oro would be particularly vain, for this is one of their chosen fields. When you say Rio de Oro—*en connaissance de cause*—you say *air* as much as you say *earth*. The "Airmen of the Rio de Oro" are today as much a part of this Rio de Oro as are the famous "Blue Men" themselves. And it was my privilege while in Morocco to meet one of the most unusual of this new tribe of the sky—one of the outstanding airmen of the Rio de Oro. I refer to Mr. Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Having undertaken to tell you something about the "Blue Men" of the deserts, I must also touch upon the men up above them.

Around the *Vol de Nuit*, and the *Sand-Wind* of these deserts, collects most of what is melodramatic in the Air Life of the Rio de Oro—and also startlingly beautiful (for what is more beautiful than the records brought back to us by men who have lived amongst clouds and storms?).

The French Aeropostale Service linking Patagonia and Toulouse—the establishment of which is one of the heroic events of the last decade—instituted the *Vol de Nuit* (otherwise the Air Service would have lost to the liner and railway train by night what it gained from them by day: it was a question of life and death for the interests of the air).

Antoine de Saint Exupéry, in his book *Vol de Nuit* (it was published in 1931), shows us the airman, and more especially the Aeropostale-man, as no one else will ever be able to do (for it was the first months of

that service that were the most glorious). André Gide in his excellent Introduction to this important little novel, says of it with great justness: "Le héros de *Vol de Nuit*, non deshumanisé certes, s'élève à une vertue surhumaine. Je crois que ce qui me plaît surtout dans ce récit frémissant, c'est sa noblesse."

Noblesse, in a way we cannot use that word in English, is the term indeed that we need to describe the mind that is revealed in *Vol de Nuit*. All that is *base*—to use another word that accommodates itself with a bashful awkwardness upon English lips except where money is concerned—is ignored (though one knows that in a highly capitalized undertaking of this sort the life of the pilots would scarcely be a matter of anxious concern to the Direction). Nothing but the loftiest of principles finds a place in this nobly conceived and admirably written air epic—this, as Gide says, "frémissant" sketch.

But if all the Aeropostale airmen were dipped in the rare epical emotion pervading *Vol de Nuit* (and that I am persuaded must be more or less the case), then the deserts and the upper atmosphere, suspended above the Rio de Oro, would be a superhuman tract (and I believe it is). At least as fanatical as the inhabitants of the tracts beneath (of the men of the Sequiet el Hamra—Ouled Ma'gels or Reguibats—dipped for their part in the inky indigo of their cottonades) must be the fanatics of "action" to be found above. They "act," these extraordinary airmen, "as if there was something that exceeded in value human life" just like the "Blue" mystics beneath them, in



Superbly mounted and commanded by a French officer, the Sultan's Black Lancers is one of the finest military units in Morocco.



The Moroccan population often greets a visiting celebrity with elaborate figurines held aloft on poles.

fact—though whether that something be any sort of “Allah” I cannot conjecture.

But *Vol de Nuit* must certainly be read—although it does not deal specifically with the air life we are called upon to consider here. I have read no book that imposed the same conviction of the high values involved in the psychology of human flight—in its first and epical period of course. Here is another specimen (inadequately translated, I am afraid):

“In any crowd of people,” reflects the hero of *Vol de Nuit*, “there are men, not evident to the casual observer, marked with no sign, but who are prodigious messengers.” A consciousness on the part of these here written about, that on account of the intensity of their experience, they are marked off from other men, is stressed throughout. If all airmen felt like this (perhaps it is lucky they do not) we should speedily have an Aristocracy of the Air. (I suspect in this case de Saint Exupéry lends to his more prosaic companions in some measure the romantic elevation of his own nature.) The Superman of this brief novel goes for a walk—but with the full consciousness of the fact (and properly so) that even *on foot* he is not as other men: he “thought how, turning about their *kiosques à musique*, the little bourgeois, of little townships, lived a life seemingly dumb, but sometimes in fact heavy with human drama.” . . . His own ill instructed him in many things: “That opens certain windows” thought he.—Then about eleven o’clock . . . he turned in the direction of the offices of the Company. Slowly, with his shoulders, he divided the

stagnant crowd about the mouth of the cinemas. He lifted his eyes towards the stars, which shone in the narrow lane of sky above him, almost effaced by the electric signs, and thought "Tonight, with my two Mails in the air and on their way, I am responsible for an entire sky! That star is a sign! It is searching for me in this crowd of people, it picks me out. That is why I feel a little foreign, a little solitary." A musical phrase came back to him: it was a few notes of a sonata he had heard with some friends the day before. His friends had not understood: "That art bores *us*, and it bores *you*—only you do not admit it."—"Perhaps . . ." he had replied.

"He had felt solitary in the same manner as again tonight, but very rapidly he had understood the richness of such a solitude. The message of this music came to him, to him alone among this average-mankind, with the softness of a secret. So with the sign of the star. He was being addressed, among so many people, in a tongue that only he could understand."

That (the speech of the stars) is the tongue of the "strange peasants" coming down out of the cloud-caps and precipices of the heavens!

So much for the peculiar nature of these other men of the sky: but there is something odder than this duplication of the desert (which has to be reckoned with, as I think has been shown). It is this. On occasion *the desert itself* levitates. It rises bodily into the air for thousands of feet—what is its maximum I do not know—and provides an almost solid surface, far above the inferior plain, as though to afford an ab-

surdly physical basis for this mere metaphor of mine. It is the *sand-wind*—that is what this agency is called. It is by means of the sand-wind that the desert has this strange power of levitation. At the bottom of its scorching depths there are still the inferior nomads, with their ears and noses full of red-hot sand. On high are the Airmen of The Rio de Oro, in their roaring air skiffs, dashing along a burning reddish surface—the roof of the storm, in a fresh, mildly sunlit world. In the best-known popular account of what occurs, it is described as follows: “We were in fact flying above a surface at once dense and vague, impenetrable, flat as a superficies of worn metal. This had nothing in common with those cloud-seas which I had often traversed in the higher atmosphere, and which the light, according to the time of the day, transforms by magic into snowy mountain ranges, cascades of coral, or blocks of fire. The matter that this time I gazed out upon, stretching to infinity, from south to north, from west to east, was of a neutral color, and of so compact a grain that the shadow of our machine fell upon it with the utmost definition. It seemed as if all of a sudden an *ideal plain* had come into existence beneath us, situated between us and the real plain below.”

This is from the *Vent de Sable* by J. Kessel, where he is describing a six-hundred-kilometer journey on the Aeropostale Route between Cap Juby and Villa Cisneros, the two points held by the Spaniards in the Rio de Oro.

Mr. Kessel's book is not a good one—it is not a book

of the high order of *Vol de Nuit*. But it is about the Rio de Oro and it describes the life of the air above the Mauretanian wastes.

Anyone who has encountered the sand-wind elsewhere, will, by trebling its density, be able no doubt to picture this peculiar form of storm, proper I believe to Rio de Oro. In late July there are sudden and alarming spasms of red sand-storm in the plain of Marrakech, for instance. Hot as is the sun (it reached 125 degrees in the shade this summer during my stay), that is nothing to the breath of the sirocco sand-wind. You see a red cloud behind the palm-gardens: then the palms begin whirling suddenly in all directions, as they are struck, their lofty India-rubber trunks dashing their plumed crests against each other: the sun vanishes in the red whirlwind, then the blast hits you—you find yourself wrapt by the sand-wind. Your face and hands are pricked and scorched as if you were standing in front of a formidable furnace, in the bombardment of hot particles.

Mr. Kessel's account of the flight to Villa Cisneros is a little disagreeable and silly (with that sort of feminine thrillishness and volubility that spoils all the more popular French literature—and from which de Saint Exupéry is so conspicuously free)—it is in fact too much so to be translated intact. But I will give you the gist of it—it is a first-hand report of this very special order of burning fog and storm in one.

Mr Kessel's journey began in the face of the mild threat conveyed by a slight sand-fog. "The morning had been foggy," he says, "or, rather, it had been

sandy: for the fog which covered the coast was formed of solid molecules, which the desert blew out over the ocean." But the fog cleared up: about noon they got away, and should have reached Villa Cisneros in about four hours of normal flying.

Mr. Kessel, after peering down idly at the inhospitable desert for a while, composed himself, inside the *carlingue*, to listen in to the radio messages. Then rather suddenly he realized that the air had become *fresh*. "We must be pretty high up," thought he. But, looking out, his view "was blocked by some novel element, close beneath the machine." This novel element was the roof of the sand-wind.

They had gone right above it, and there it was on all hands now, nothing else was visible at all: it was the surface of a new, less palpable, earth.

But, in such a case as this, there was a rather alarming side to the experience. It was already four o'clock, and they should in the normal course of things have already reached Villa Cisneros. This artificial plain of torrid sand in-flight invariably moved *oceanward*. Often it would stretch out from the coast of the Rio de Oro over the Atlantic as far as the Canaries—reëstablishing, in its semi-solid form, the land-bridge of the Lost Atlantis. First confronted by the compact columns of sand, stretching between earth and sky, the pilot has rushed up the side of them and surmounted the body of the storm or wind-fog or whatever it is. But now, since there was no limit to its extent it seemed (and it might stretch for a thousand miles to St. Louis de Senegal, as often happened) between

then and sunset he would be compelled to dive into the burning red darkness underneath, and go and hunt blindfold for Villa Cisneros somewhere at the bottom! That was the alarming side to this otherwise even and agreeable flight, in a pleasantly fresh atmosphere.

The *Vol de Nuit* above the Andes, when the pilot is attacked by a cyclone among the highest peaks (which start to vomit a gray snow) in de Saint Exupéry's book, is a splendid achievement: and Mr. Kessel is not able to write things like that: but all the same he gives a quite creditable journalistic account of this plunge, as the sun is setting, into the heart of the sand-wind.

For three hours they had flown without any point of reference, in an abstract world of fluid sand. Where were they? Were they bearing inland over the Rio de Oro, towards the wildest depths of Mauretania? Were they over the ocean? Had they passed Villa Cisneros, and were they on the road to Port-Etienne? With these queries revolving in their respective heads they plunged down into the sand-wind.

"A suffocating breath rushed into my throat and parched it, a sort of minute hail scorched my skin: and the light that reached us was yellow and sulphurous, decomposed and filtering—submarine and subterranean at once."

Down into this they dropped at top speed—they had been at a considerable altitude and this descent was steep and rapid at first, then they changed to a gentler angle of flight.

The "Radio" bellows in Kessel's ear that a message

has come through from the plane that had just left Port-Etienne. The sand-wind is there too!—They continue to descend into this uniform “dark, torrid, and powdery prison.” Then, all of a sudden, rushing up at them from beneath, are the foaming waves of this most permanently bellicose portion of the Atlantic Ocean. They charge the first enormous foaming roller. Columns of mustard-yellow smoke—which is the bottom of the immense pit of the sand-wind—whirl in the midst of the glittering spray. They are up and over the edge of the wave. And then begins a sort of switchback—in order not to lose touch with one element, at least, suggestive of the nearness of the shore. The roar of the waves, Mr. Kessel assures us, overcame at times the sound of the motor. Then, when least expected, a cliff springs up out of the water: with a jump the plane clears it, bending upon one wing, and then everything disappears—they are once more in the abstract heart of the sand-wind. Soon they are back again above the breakers: and then an incredible tacking operation starts. “This coming and going . . . was of the same order of sensation as that encountered in an anxiety-dream. Everything about it, besides, partook of the colors and outlines of nightmares. The steep coast-line surged up with a terrifying rapidity—there it was, hollow, *grenu*, ill-omened: and it vanished again as quickly as it had come. It appeared mobile and murderous.” Meanwhile the motor got red-hot: whether Mr. Kessel is inventing it or not, he describes the plane as growing tired and heavy and no longer vaulting the cliffs quite so energetically

as at first. Then they get into a zone well-known to all the airmen of the Rio de Oro for dangerous atmospheric displacements, in the neighborhood of the earth: the traveler (Mr. Kessel) and the wireless operator are shot about like bullets in the *coque* of the plane, as the machine flounders and trips in these treacherous inequalities of the air.—However, I have followed far enough the adventures of Mr. Kessel, at the bottom of the sand-wind: he did survive to tell the tale—at length they groped their way back to Villa Cisneros.—You see what the sand-wind is by now, at all events. So much I think we have gathered from Mr. Kessel. It is a moving block of desert: and it is always moving out from the coasts of the Sahara over the Atlantic Ocean, which (many people would have us believe) not unlike itself, a fluid block, is superimposed upon the twilit depths of the submerged Atlantis.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLUE SULTAN

LOOKED at purely from the standpoint of the politics of today and of tomorrow, the "Blue Men" are important people. For the conquest of Maghreb by the European is rather a pacification (even an extreme form of *entente* between the French upon the one hand, and the Sultan, and still more the caïds, upon the other) than a final military overthrow.

Should Morocco (as a consequence of some great dispute between the nations of Europe, or for any other cause) begin to slip out of the hands of the European, one of the two places where the clutch of the Nazarene will first loosen is the *Blue Belt*, in the extreme south. The other is the Riff, in the extreme north. These, for the French, are the two danger-spots.

Before 1907 (the date of the entrance of the French into Morocco) the Cherifian power was already extinct: since 1894, the date of the death of Moulay Hassan, Morocco had become more and more (though covertly as yet, and the English still in the running for a slice of it) a colony of Europe. In the

last years of the nineties, Cunninghame-Graham is, upon all hands, passionately assured how out of all measure is the venality of Ba Ahmed, the mulatto vizier at Marrakech. Then, a few more years having elapsed, things have grown worse not better: Si Madani, the greatest of the Glaoua, after his discomfort at the hands of the Rogui, escaped and made his way (via Tangier) to Fez. But there he found the Tazi crowd at the head of affairs. The Tazis were a family of Islamized Jews, disliked almost as much by their fellow Israelites as by the Arabs or Berbers. While the Sultan passed his time in letting off fireworks, playing at trains, roller-skating round the throne-room, or riding bicycle races in the grounds of his palace with the inmates of his private brothel, the Tazis ruled the roost: and when the Glaoui—"Great Lord of the Atlas"—turned up at Fez, it can be imagined how heartily the Tazis enjoyed humiliating this Great Lord of the Mountains in every way they could devise, and also how effectively this all-powerful, political ring prevented him from getting anything out of the Sultan. The representative of Allah upon earth in Morocco did not, so to say, exist any more. The Glaoui felt he had had all his pains for nothing. Probably as he quitted Fez, upon the homeward road back to his mountain kingdom, he came to a certain radical conclusion regarding the "Makhzen" and all its works, and in a general way as to the direction in which his own personal interest lay. If subsequently he threw in his lot with the French, and stuck to that arrangement, it was no doubt because he

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felt that the *open* occupation of Morocco by a European state would not expose Maghreb more to the influence of Non-Moor—Non-Berber, or Non-Arab—than was already the case, and that at least a less irresponsible form of exploitation would be preferable. Also, being more frankly Non-Islamic and Non-Moorish, a frank Protectorate by a single Power might be less dangerous to him and to the other great caïds, and so of course to all the ultimate interests of Barbary (if those general interests ever entered his head).

Abd el Azziz, in 1907, was deposed (Si Madani when he got back to Marrakech saw to that, as a first step—popping the umbrella over the Sultan's brother, Moulay Hafid's, head): he was deposed for having "sold his country to the 'Christians.'" But by this time those "Christians" destined in the end to administer it were already *in* it: the French. It was too late to depose a Sultan. It was too late also for Ma el Ainin (Almoravid *de nos jours*) to repeat the purgation-by-the-nomadic-horde, which so often had been successful. When Ma el Ainin, with his Blue Men, came up from the Sahara in 1910 and invaded Morocco, in order to purge it of the Christians, he acted as a convenient "Blue" ninepin, nothing more, for the French artillery. His eclipse was instantaneous.—This was the first "Sultan Bleu"—or Blue Sultan.

Why was Ma el Ainin (in 1910) and after him his son, Moulai Ahmed el Hiba (in 1912) called "the Blue Sultan"? He was given this picturesque title, in the first place, because he was proclaimed Sultan

throughout the south: and secondly, because he was the leader of the Blue Men of the Rio de Oro.

The so-called "Rogui," Bou Hamara, and Raisuli, were inferior Men-of-the-hour altogether to Ma el Ainin, or even to El Hiba. Since the beginning of the present century there have been four noted leaders in Morocco: first the Blue Sultan, second Abd el Krim, of Riff fame: third and fourth the Rogui and Raisuli. The first two of these native leaders represent also something definitely geographic; they serve to indicate what must remain the two danger-spots in Morocco for European power. All serious revolt must have its origin either in (1) the Riff Mountains in the north, or in (2) the Rio de Oro (or, more generally, the Occidental Sahara) in the south.

In August, 1931, it was announced that Abd el Krim had escaped. He was reported as back in the Riff. That has not been confirmed and as that has been repeated before may not be true. But who can doubt but that he will eventually find his way there? In the Cortes, Señor Prieto is now interpolated daily by anxious deputies as to whether the reports that the disorganized, semi-syndicalized, Spanish Troops of Occupation in the Riff are selling their arms to the "Moros" are reliable. Are they? It seems at least highly likely. And arms are supposed to be pouring in by way of the contraband fleets as well.

But if the Riffs are feverishly arming, the "Blue Men" are also acquiring a rifle or two. I think it is highly feasible, that, when the time is ripe, the French will find themselves confronted once more with their

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old friend Abd el Krim. Assisted by every enemy of the French régime, and all the numerous armament manufacturers and their faithful filibusters of the Gordon Canning order, all this is likely to start again, up in the north, one can but suppose, at any moment. And if it should, then a simultaneous rising in the *Blue Belt* (with its center in the Rio de Oro and the "dissident," western, Anti-Atlas) is to be expected. If the French were very heavily engaged in the Riff, they might even temporarily find it expedient to withdraw from the Sous.—This sort of situation would, at all events, be contemplated by the powers (whatever they are—the usual money-thugs) arrayed against the French.

The French soldiers, or "colons," on the spot are quite conscious of these possibilities. When in the Valley of the Sous a secret store of contraband is brought to light—or when some Portuguese filibuster is caught red-handed, squatting upon a caseful of machine-guns disguised as agricultural implements—and you ask them what the Berbers can possibly want with all these expensive weapons (since the Protectorate imposes an absolute peace upon the tribes, cantons, leffs, amghars and caïds) the Frenchman on the spot will reply, "What for? What do they want arms for? Why, *de nous foutre à la porte*—to kick us out, of course!" And he will add: "Do you suppose that they would let us stop here a single minute if they could help it? You don't know them, if you think *that!*"

The colonial difficulties of England and of France in the East—in India and Cochin-China—are bound

to influence the colonial situation nearer home. In this brief account I merely indicate what I believe to be the situation—I am not for or against colonists, either English or French. (I should not regard it as a fearful tragedy if the French were “kicked out” of Morocco, or if the English found that Warren Hastings had bitten off more than his descendants today were able to chew.) *Le constate*—that is all. But certainly if the French go, in my opinion theirs should be the last European interference in the affairs of Barbary.

In one of the military districts I visited in the Anti-Atlas there had been a rebellion about eighteen months before—it was at the first castle I visited with Captain La Croix. There a local sheik had taken it into his head to *faire le malin*, and, at the head of 200 tribesmen, to attack a French post, just this side of the line of “dissidence.” A company of the Legion, no more, was required to route him. Within twenty-four hours he had been turned out, his brother made sheik in his place (it was his castle we invaded), and all once more was as calm as if nothing had happened. But these disturbances might have another complexion if the general atmosphere was less settled than at present, the support more extensive and better organized.

The French authorities attach very little importance to the Blue Sultan—for they know they could bomb him to bits inside half-an-hour if necessary. Kerdous would be ashes within twenty-four hours of a rising, at present. Yet there the Blue Sultan is, com-

fortably established not so far inside the line of dissidence: one can almost perceive him as one stands at the principal gate of Tiznit. And ultimately the enemy of the French in Africa, as of the English in India, is not the "native," but foreign interests of one kind and another, persons who strike through the "native" element at the White Lord and Master.

I cannot at all vouch for the accuracy of stories regarding the Blue Sultan, but many of them are highly picturesque. It is said, for instance, that he has as his right-hand man a "German officer"—something of the same sort as Abd el Krim's German adviser, I suppose. This German is supposed to have been joined by other foreigners, more or less White like himself, and there he is supposed to be, married to the niece of the Blue Sultan, busily organizing the Blue Men for war against the French.

The present Blue Sultan is called Merebbi Rebo: he is the brother of El Hiba, and the son of Ma el Ainin. He lives in the neighborhood of the ancient kingdom of Tazerwalt, on the edge of the desert, in an Anti-Atlas or Saharan city named Kerdous.

But it is possible that the very name of El Hiba is unknown to you: perhaps before pursuing my account of the Blue Sultan, and what he may signify for French policy before the French have done with him, I had better go into his antecedents. Most conspicuous among them is Ma el Ainin, Merebbi Rebo's father. Ma el Ainin was a Soudanese fanatic—an eminent theologian and distinguished sorcerer. He would have founded (that is regarded as certain) a new dy-

nasty in Morocco, on the old "Blue," Almoravidic, pattern, if the European artillery had not been there to pull down the curtain on the history of Barbary—for the moment, at all events. All the great historical traditions of a "backward" country vanished into thin air before the European artillery. One or two small Krupp cannons were enough to turn the tide and instantly reverse the fortunes of Great Caïds in the Atlas. Men nowhere can stand against the Machine. He who can buy himself the deadly Machines is the Lord of the World (not only of the Atlas).

Ma el Ainin saw the light in 1838, in Mauretania. He belonged to the great Berber tribe, the Sanhadja: he came from the same part of the world, and belonged to the same tribe, that had furnished Maghreb with its first great desert-dynasty—the Almoravids. And this person began to model himself after a time upon the Almoravids, that appears to be incontestable: he felt in his bones that he was a Man-of-the-hour perhaps—only of course he had to wait until his "hour" should come. Against this glorious squally day (of historical endeavor) Ma el Ainin built himself a city. Obviously he could not have built himself a city if he had not been a very powerful man; and very powerful he was, both in respect of his eminent father (I will not burden you with his name too) and on account of his own distinguished abilities.

When he had gone to Mecca, and stopped in the East for a while, come back to Mauretania, married, been a nomad and so forth long enough, his father sent for him. He made him a "sheik" and "invested

him with the Turban," to show that he was a Sheik of Sheiks, and a great guy in the Blue World. That was a good start. He had studied the Black Arts in the Soudan as a child: these he practiced freely: he spread all kinds of reports too about himself and his superlative destiny—he surrounded himself with every sort of available halo and made himself feared by practicing every kind of Soudanese conjuring trick: and then in 1888, having by that date a fine big lad of his own, called Taleb Khiyar, he told Taleb to go and build his father a lovely city, and Taleb went and built his father a city.

This city is in the middle of the Rio de Oro. (Not a nice spot for a city, but Ma el Ainin had his reasons.) In seven years it was built. Colonel Mouret uncereemoniously knocked it down with his cannons in 1913. It is a ruin now. Its name was Smara.

It is not, however, quite certain that Smara was not the site of an older city. And then of course (to return to that point) why did Ma el Ainin tell his son Taleb to build him a city just where he did? That was partly no doubt because it was a good place for a Man-of-the-hour, the acknowledged Maraboutic leader of all the Blue People, to have his capital. (For of course Smara was to be his capital.) But also it was in the neighborhood of the Sequiet-el-Hamra (on the Ouain-Selouan, in fact). And the Sequiet-el-Hamra is bound up with the history of Islamic mysticism in Barbary more than any other place perhaps. The Sequiet-el-Hamra was a hot-bed of Maraboutic activity about the

fifteenth century. But the fifteenth century is the one century of all others in the history of Maghreb about which least is known. And exactly what the swarm of Marabouts in the Sequiet-el-Hamra were doing or why they were there is not at all clear, it seems. *Therefore* no one is quite able to tell us, in the present state of our knowledge about the Blue World, *exactly* why Ma el Ainin must hit upon that spot and not another.

All that is known is that there was a great ferment in the Rio de Oro—that is to say, from the Sous to the Soudan, at the great (but obscure) epoch of the Maraboutic mysticism. This is the territory of what are now called the “Blue Men.”—But again I must go back, behind the more modern sorcerer, Ma el Ainin. I must go right back into the heart of the “Blue” World to a time when it was not yet “Blue.”

There was a time when it was not yet “Blue”: but on the other hand, it certainly was “Veiled.” And it is really necessary to understand first of all, that the Blue Men of today are Berbers not Arabs. But it is more involved than that: for they happen also to be *fanatically Islamized* Berbers. They were originally Sanhadja nomads (the Sanhadjas who gave their name to Senegal). And the Sanhadjas were one of the greatest of all the Berber tribes.

Prior to the fourteenth or fifteenth century the Sanhadja and Touaregs were all one large and powerful family of *veiled nomadic* Berbers: they occupied the whole of the Western Sahara from the Atlas to

the Niger, all the plains of Rio de Oro and Sous. They were camped in the plains at the doors of Rabat.

Then powerful tribes of Arabs came, or were dispatched, down into the Rio de Oro. They defeated the Veiled Berbers. All the Veiled Berbers, except the Touaregs, became subject to the Arabs. And at last they became so ashamed of *the Veil* (or *litham*) which they came to regard as a symbol of inferiority and servitude, the emblem of a defeated race, that they left it off altogether. They became fanatical Mussulmans. They even learned to speak Arabic, and quite forgot Berber. In this way the Berber world of the south was cut in two or rather three. The Berbers in the Atlas (High and Anti-) remained independent, and Berber. Those in the Occidental Sahara became Arabized; and the Touaregs (still with their veils) became isolated from the rest, in the depths of the Sahara.

The Arab domination lasted long enough to blot out the Berber tongue, to suppress the veils worn over their faces by the Blue Men, and to inject them with a violent, mystical Islamism—long enough to make the Rio de Oro, in fact, “the intellectual center” of Islam in Maghreb. But the Arabs did nothing more than that with their power: they confined themselves as usual to being politically destructive, and to saddling another race with Allah and all the highly political, proselytizing, mumbo-jumbo of Islam. Then they degenerated. They lasted 300 years at most. By the eighteenth century the Berber had driven them out of all their strongholds, one after the other.

If a certain amount of Arab blood has passed into the Beraber, or Blue Man, of the Rio de Oro, here and there, how much is it? Very little, Gautier and most authorities think. The most famous Arab tribe in the history of Morocco is the Ma'qil. It is the Ma'qil who subdued the Sanhadjas. It is they who colonized all the Moroccan Sahara. Ibn Kaldoun, the best of the Arab historians, writes: "The Ma'qil came into Maghreb with the tribes descended from Hilal, and it is said that at that time there were fewer than 200 of them."

There is apparently no reason to regard these figures as an exaggeration: and so, as they were constantly engaged in battles with the Berbers (and that does not lead to a waxing, but to the reverse, in the numbers of a people) it is reasonable to assume that there is not so much Arab blood as all that to account for in the Moroccan deserts, and in fact that most of the Blue Men are also of the most true blue Berber race. Even many of the so-called "Arab" tribes, such as the famous Beni Hassan—or even Ouled Ma'qil, all that is left to remind us of the Ma'qil—may not be, or have been, Arab at all: "On aurait tort de croire," says M. de la Chapelle, "que les tribus dominantes soient toutes de l'origine arabe": but all—"tous, suzerains et vassaux, ont abandonné le voile, devenu l'emblème de leur situation de vaincus."

The Berber Renaissance, as this movement of revolt against the Arab has been called, culminated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the com-

bination of the Atlas Berbers and those of the Sahara. Between them (and abetted by the Touaregs) as the so-called "Berabers" of the Sahara they came to dominate all the western oases: and finally the remnants of the independent Arab tribes vanished altogether.

This Berber Renaissance came to its culminating point only as it were yesterday. The great kasbahs of the Atlas, the founding of Smara, the great movement northward of the Blue Men of Ma el Ainin were the last expressions, no doubt, of this last powerful ferment of the Berber nationality.—And then came the European, with his cannon (and if it had not been the French, it would certainly have been the English or the German—far more destructive, in all probability) and the curtain was rung down upon the Berber Renaissance, and perhaps upon the Berber history-book altogether. At Sidi bou Otman Berber history encountered another dimension, as it were. In the very midst of their tradition, full of the old Almoravidic dream as ever, up from their tents in the desert came the Blue Men as convinced as ever of their mission, since another purgation of Islam was due, and another dynasty (of lean men instead of fat) was about to be founded. And then the French shells burst among them and that exploded at the same time that old Berber dream.

But from 1880 to 1910 Ma el Ainin, in ignorance of this new dimension (the *mechanical*, that is, superceding the *human*), prepared to become an Almora-vid in due course, when the call came: had his city

built, and got everything ready for the moment. Alone amongst the Mauretanians, his father's family had retained the veil, as an emblem of sanctity—it was (although he did not understand that) a *Berber* emblem too. All the stage was set. Maghreb was again menaced by the Nazarene: it was misled and betrayed by impossible sultans. In 1910 he invaded Morocco. And like his son three years later, he was immediately routed, and he died upon the spot. His age was seventy-two. That I should call a rather sad destiny, for obviously according to the old system of magic to which he belonged he was intended to be Tsar of Maghreb, from Tangier to Timbuctoo. It is sad, like the untimely vanishing of the Red Indian. The Magic of the Machine is a magic that should make those that handle it more afraid of it than they are; for machines are far more terrifying than djinns. But that in any case is how that great Marabout ended his days, and the Blue Men under the leadership of his son, El Hiba, have seemed, politically, to come to an end, too.

The French Administrator will assure you that *les Hommes Bleus* are as dead as mutton. Merebbi Rebo?—why, what is he but a poor devil who travels about from ksar to ksar trying to raise money! And no doubt the French Administrator's account of the matter is perfectly correct, providing the Blue Men are not taken up by some hostile Magician of the Machine—capitalized and modernized. Is this possible? I do not know at all: all I know is that the Blue Men are being eyed with a compassion that is suspect by filibusters with more rifles and other armaments than they know

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what to do with (*a hiatus* in supply and demand). Politics I know nothing about. But I expect, if one cared to delve under the surface, that a hundred political currents could be found—perhaps even good healthy subterraneous rivers.

CHAPTER XV.

ARMS SMUGGLERS AS VEILED MEN OF THE SOUTH

THE "Blue Men of the South" occupy the territory from the Sous to Senegal, if by "Blue" is meant the wearing of blue garments, and generally it is. The peasants of the Sous wear clothes that are blue, and no other Moroccans are distinguished by costumes of that color. But the consistent and deliberate staining of the skin with the blue dye from imported cottons is peculiar to the Mauretanian nomad, the Blue Man of the Rio de Oro. There, and in the Soudan, even the face, hands and feet are brought to a deep blue *patine* with the indigo of the *guinée* cottonade, well sunk into the dark enamel of the unwashed savage hide. (Neither Touareg nor Blue Man of the Rio de Oro ever uses water to clean himself, the former regarding the use of water for that purpose as peculiarly disgusting, and rather unlucky.) —The Mauretanian, when buying a cottonade, wets his thumb and runs it over the surface of the cloth to see if the dye comes off well. His one desire is to be absolutely as blue as possible. That is

the real Blue Man then—bearded, blue-dyed, wild-eyed and every inch a religious fanatic. These Blue Men are to be met with in every souk of the Sous, and are of course even more often seen in the oasis city of Tiznit: and they are radically different in appearance, that is certain, from their sedentary Blue brethren—some more, some less: the farther you penetrate into the interior, the less like the Berber of the Sous they become, no doubt.

Merebbi Rebo, the Blue Sultan, may or may not be plotting a rising: what is certain is that he is recognized as Sultan and as spiritual suzerain by a number of dissident tribes, unfriendly to the French—for instance, the Ait ba Amran and the Ida Oultit. The true Blue Belt begins roughly at Tiznit. The Ait ba Amran, a very powerful Blue unit, outside the French imperium, a coast tribe, would be an important unit, of shock-troops, in any thorough-going Blue revolt. Where Merebbi Rebo actually lives, namely at Kerdous, is Igezzoulen, if that means anything to you. It is situated on the mountain of the Ida ou Bakil, about level with Tiznit. It is said to be a place of some importance. But no European has ever seen it. It belongs to that large impenetrable district of mountain fortress and ksar—upon the edge of which, much farther to the east, are, for instance, the French outposts at Tatta, where at present fighting is proceeding. (For a hundred kilometers, even, upon the near side of Tatta, you can only make your way under armed convoy, and the convoys are frequently attacked.) As to the regions of the ksars and palm-

gardens east of Tazerwalt, that it would be quite impossible to visit, for any European—far less easy today, in fact, than in the time of Foucauld. A very desperate sort of filibuster, traveling in howitzers, or in the high-explosive line, might get there, but no one else.

You cannot go to the territory of the Ait ba Amran, nor the Ida Oultit. Nothing beyond or around Tiznit is safe, unless you are engaged in the contraband trade. Only the road between Agadir and Tiznit is all right, and after dark that is not safe they say, not so much because of robbers from the mountains, as owing to the crossness of the smugglers, who of course do a roaring trade after dark.

The French are completely documented, it is unnecessary to say, upon these unapproachable, "dissident," tribes. They know all about them from their native agents and spies. In the *Documents et Renseignements de la Direction Générale des Affaires Indigènes*, for example, you can find out all there is to know about most of them. Lieutenant-Colonel Justinard (who was for four years at Tiznit) has written a very interesting brochure on the Ait ba Amran. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Justinard, the Ait ba Amran "continues to proclaim the sovereignty of Merebbi Rebo (that is, the Blue Sultan)—welcoming him when he goes into their country." And he adds: "In the event of an advance by the French troops, it is probable that the tribes of the Ait ba Amran would confront them, in a solid and resistant

block: but their resistance would not, most likely, last very long. We (the French authorities) entertain such close relations with so many of them, that, at the propitious moment, there would be no absence of intermediaries to arrange for their submission."

But this would depend no doubt upon many factors from outside the region involved, and outside Morocco altogether: also upon the nature of the appeal of the anti-foreigner agitation in the Blue Belt, and what support the tribes immediately supporting the Blue Sultan, in the Western Anti-Atlas and the region of the Noun, received from the still "Bluer" desert beyond. In this connection it is necessary to remember that *all* the tribes of the south gave their support in 1912 to El Hiba, when he was proclaimed Sultan at Tiznit, and placed himself at the head of the "Crusade of the South." In the words of Lieutenant-Colonel Justinard: "All the sub-tribes of the Ait ba Amran, as all the people of the Sous, *without distinction of 'leff,'* grouped themselves behind El Hiba."

There is always the "Crusade" factor to be reckoned with, also the dislike for all that is foreign, which is fairly powerful, and the promise of loot.

But the dislike of foreigners is easily brought to a head for *foreign* agitation—as the Germans during the war kindled the anti-French emotions of the Sous and the Noun. During the European War the Germans pointed to their alliance with the Turks to show what a Moslem-loving lot they were, and they suc-

ceeded in thoroughly stirring up the Ait ba Amran and the rest. A landing was to be effected upon the coast of the Ait ba Amran below Tiznit. This Probster *coup* was of the same order as that planned by our friend Spilsbury, Mr. Cunninghame-Graham's "club-man-filibuster."

All I am saying here, then, is that the northern part of the Spanish Sahara is an ideal spot for an unlimited number of *coups de main*. It possesses a deserted coast, it is outside the French zone, it is Spanish only in name. It is as completely isolated as it is possible to be. Filibusters are as irresistibly attracted towards it as fashionable people are drawn in train-loads every spring to the Côte d'Azur. As there is no substitute on earth for Cannes and Monte Carlo, so there is no substitute for the Southern Sous.

De Saint Exupéry told me a story of a Blue rising, but I am not clear whether it was the one of 1921, or a later one. He said it was a much more recent affair. At all events, the Blue Sultan had raised his head again (the head which is the only Berber head perpetuating the tradition of the veil) and the Blue dissidents of the Anti-Atlas began massing. A little prematurely one overzealous fraction attacked a French outpost in the mountains: and the first thing that the French commandant at Tiznit heard was that two or three Mokhaznis had been slaughtered, and a European corporal had been boiled alive. The entire tribe had gathered round a large iron cooking-pot, brought to the boil with pine-faggots, and then

thrown the corporal into it. Twenty seconds after he had received this startling intelligence, the commandant at Tiznit was at the telephone, and not very much more time had elapsed before, at the military flying-ground at Agadir, the planes were being loaded with bombs. Another half-hour or so, and, while the tribe in question were still dancing round the unfortunate corporal in the iron saucepan used for cooking sheep, a rain of bombs started to fall upon them from the sky. Many were killed. Every morning for a week the planes made their way to the territory of the offending tribe, and dropped bombs on it. At last a deputation waited upon the commandant at Tiznit. He sent them away without seeing them. Next morning the planes came back and dropped another hail of bombs.—Day after day the elders of the tribe waited upon the commandant at Tiznit. He saw them at length and said, "Do you think it is a nice thing to boil a corporal? What have you come here for? Aren't you ashamed to show your faces? I refuse to see people who boil corporals! You must not come here any more—I shall not see you if you do!" And the next morning the planes went up and dropped bombs as usual. The spokesmen of the tribe continued to wait upon the commandant at Tiznit. At last he saw them again. "What do you want now?" he asked them. "We want to offer our submission immediately," they said. "We wish to become your allies! You keep on dropping bombs, we cannot get on with our work. Our fields and villages are ruined."

"What! Be friendly with people who boil corporals!" the commandant exclaimed. "I've never heard of such a thing! Nothing is further from my thoughts than being friendly with people who make a habit of boiling European corporals!—I would far sooner have people of that sort as *enemies* than as *friends*!" But the spokesmen of the tribe kissed his booted knee and implored him to make peace and to stop the aeroplanes. Then the commandant considered a moment, and he spoke as follows: "Listen! My spies tell me (I am very well informed!) that there is a meeting tomorrow of representatives of all the Blue tribes. I tell you what I will do. I do not wish to have you as *friends*—Heaven forbid! But after the tribal meeting tomorrow come down here and tell me what has been decided upon by the assembled chiefs. And do that every time there is a meeting. You get me?—O unworthy boilers of unfortunate corporals! I shall know whether you tell me the truth of course. I am excellently informed! Should you try that on and bring me incorrect information, planes will come up at once with more bombs than before. Now go, and may God be with you *never*!" In this manner the French were promptly informed of everything that occurred: the rising was suppressed.

This is a typical military café story: it no doubt represents a state of affairs that is fairly constant for these regions.

The outward and visible sign of all this ferment is the frequent capture of people smuggling arms. On

July 9, 1931, for instance, the *Sud Marocain* published the following report:

CONTREBANDE D'ARMES

dans le Souss

Une affaire de contrebande d'armes, sur laquelle on garde le plus grand secret, a été découvert, ces jours derniers dans le Souss.

Les Affaires Indigènes de Taroudant étaient avisées que des dissidents s'approvisionnaient en armes et en munitions dans les Ida Indouzel. Une surveillance fut organisée et elle permit de surprendre des indigènes sortant d'une maison avec deux animaux chargés de cartouches. Un officier qui se trouvait au Souk Telata des Manaba, aussitôt prévenu fit une perquisition dans la maison, ou l'on trouva un gros approvisionnement d'armes et de munitions.

Après des constatations le Caïd Mohamed ould Malek ainsi que son neveu auraient été arrêtés.

This was July 8: but two weeks before that, on June 24, a far more spectacular seizure of arms was effected, this time just outside Agadir. No smuggler in his senses would go by road when he could with perfect ease get his cases of arms in by ship. But why these particular consignments had come by road, was, I heard in the case of the July 8 seizure, because the arms were destined for the immediate neighborhood

of Agadir. They were for people in *pays soumis*, in short.

In the affair of the "Portuguese navigator," the arms would normally have gone by sea (to Ifni, or elsewhere, upon the coast south of Agadir): only the "Portuguese navigator's" ship was being repaired. The reader was almost at once, in the case of the "Portuguese navigator" transported into an atmosphere of romance. "Veiled Men"—The Bluest of the Blue—stalked into the story; which only serves to show the type of romantic mind which we have to deal with in the personnel of the Contraband Traffic. They see themselves as the heroes of a Hollywood Crime Film. For, as far as one could gather, it was quite unnecessary to dress up in that way.

This must have been at the suggestion of some public-school-boy-minded White, or Pink, filibuster. For to what Berber would it ever occur, of his own accord, to dress up as a "Veiled Man"? A "Veiled Man" is for a Soussi simply a dirty indigo savage: and in the second place no Veiled Man is ever seen anywhere north of latitude 29 or 30 or at least very rarely, and the smugglers would merely be drawing attention to themselves by this fancy dress.—No, the Veiled Man touch betrays the handiwork of the romantic European, and I should not be surprised if the European were ultimately found to be an Anglo-Saxon! For what European, except the Englishman, has that childish passion for *dressing himself up as an Arab*, to which I already have drawn attention? None.

No other European sub-race except the Anglo-Saxon has ever sunk so low, culturally and intellectually: none, for instance, could have been responsible for the orgie of schoolboyishness and Victorian-housemaidishness (of the dime-novel order) exemplified by Hollywood, in its Detective Stories and Boys' Own Paper type of Strong Silent Film, could it! The arguments that point to the hand of a romantic Anglo-Saxon are irresistible! On the Van Dine principle, upon the mere evidence of style, and craftsmanship, the moment I saw "Veiled Men" I thought "*Ha Ha!* A rat, a rat!—I see my Anglo-Saxon's hand in this!"

However, I will give you a few of the bare facts: they will help to throw a light on how the country must be honeycombed with confederates of this trade, all busy passing on boxes of cartridges to each other. The "Portuguese navigator" said that he was a simple sailor who had been commissioned to land a specified cargo, at a certain place upon the coast beyond Agadir. As however his boat was *en panne*, he had gone by car instead: and if anybody (since he was himself the merest sea-captain) Ahmed ben Lahoussine now—*he* was the culprit! Ahmed was a most prosperous Chleuh, with many automobiles, residing at Casablanca. But the latter, namely Ahmed, was profoundly astonished and a little hurt when arrested. The man they wanted was obviously Zeroual, he said. So all the detectives hurried out into the bled, where Zeroual lived. But Zeroual bolted himself in. They saw him peeping at them through the shutters.

When they prepared to break in his door, Zeroual opened it suddenly and expressed his very deep astonishment and dignified displeasure at their extraordinary behavior—he had remarked what they were doing through the shutters, yes, that was true, and indeed had been at his wits' end to make out what they wanted! However, he thought if they would have a talk with a Chleuh grocer called Ahmed ben Hajim they might find out something: for meanwhile Lahoussine (who was there) had reminded Zeroual how the latter along with himself, both *veiled* like "Men of the South" had paid frequent visits to Ahmed ben Hajim. So Zeroual had to say at last something or other and he said he thought the latter might be worth hunting up.

But the cases of arms smuggling follow each other with such rapidity that the last is soon effaced in the mind of the public by some new affair: also, in order to make way for B and C, A is frequently dropped altogether in the newspapers. So with this case of the Chleuh grocers and chauffeurs, dressing themselves up as "Veiled Men." I have never heard what happened to all these "Portuguese navigators," Chleuh "grocers," and native garage proprietors. I regretted this very much. They all seemed to fade out suddenly.

Romantically disguised in the blue veils worn by the Almoravid warriors, on their way to found the Moorish Empire in Spain, these people would have made a fine police court group. But whether the matter became too intricate to report, or was shelved

FILIBUSTERS IN BARBARY

in favor of more recent cases, no more was heard of this particular band.

I think I have said enough to bring up-to-date the tales of filibusters in the Rio de Oro, and show how Captain Wyndham, in his tall ship *The Lion*, of London, and the "clubman-filibuster" of the naughty nineties, is unworthily, but extensively, followed. The "trade" invented so long ago by Captain Wyndham still flourishes, upon all that desert coast from Agadir to St. Louis de Senegal. And it can readily be seen how today Major Spilsbury would be meeting the Blue Sultan at dead of night (both disguised as Blue Men of the South, in heavy indigo lithams over their mouths and noses) in some noisome alley in Safi or Mogador: and if stopped by a French policeman the gallant major would merely curse him for an interfering (and quite impotent) ruffian, and remind him, with several more "round" oaths, that no British Subject can be touched by the police in the dominions of his majesty the Sultan of Morocco. As to the Blue Sultan, why (the indignant major would shout), *he* was his Touareg batman of course! That is how the thing would be done today.—But as it is, the social changes in England, the steady impoverishment of all true-blue "clubman-filibusters" of the Spilsbury type, means that filibustering, the world over, is the poorer too. It has "lost caste." It is no longer a profession for a gentleman, since there are no *true* "clubmen" in it now—only perhaps a few members of the R.A.C.!—A squalor, a drabness, a communist

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anonymity, has settled down upon the "trade" of Captain Wyndham, of London—towering in his Tall Ship, in the center of those "Spacious Days," able with luck to "see Marlowe plain," though too old to hope to gloat upon the calves of Essex!



1854

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